



**IN THE GRIP OF THE NYIKA**



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TORONTO

# IN THE GRIP OF THE NYIKA

*Further Adventures in British East Africa*

BY

LIEUT.-COL. J. H. PATTERSON, D.S.O.

AUTHOR OF

"THE MAN EATERS OF TSAVO"

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*

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## PREFACE

IN the following pages I have endeavoured to give a plain account of the trials and adventures which befell me on two recent expeditions through the *nyika*, or wilderness, in British East Africa. On the first trip there were three of us, and all returned safely to civilisation, although dangers were not wholly absent. On the second and longer expedition there were also three Europeans, but, alas! only two got back, the *nyika* having claimed the third; nor was the god of the wilds content with this sacrifice, for, in addition, he claimed several of my native followers. He laid his deadly grip on me as well, but I was wrested from him by the care and attention of my companion, to whose skilful nursing I feel I owe my life.

In relating the events of the journey I have considered it incumbent on me, not only to tell the exciting adventures among the wild men and wild beasts of the regions traversed, but also to give some of the more tiresome detail connected with a *safari* in the *nyika*, as my object all through has been to describe everything exactly as it actually happened.

I trust that future travellers along the route taken by me will find my maps of some use. I made them as accurate as possible under somewhat trying circumstances, and they are reproduced in eight

convenient sections. I found that the Guaso Nyiro makes a much greater bend to the south than is shown in any of the existing maps.

I took a large number of photographs on these two expeditions, but unfortunately I found on my return to civilisation that over ten score films, which I fondly hoped held excellent and unique pictures, had been ruined by the excessive heat and damp experienced on the journey. Some, however, turned out fairly well, and these, I trust, will give a fair idea of the country, people, and animals. My very sincere thanks are due to Mrs. A. Saunderson and Mr. T. J. Spooner for permission to reproduce some photographs taken by them, which much enhance any interest that the book may possess. Mr. Spooner was one of the first to explore the regions about the Aberdare range of mountains, and it was he who discovered Lake El Bolosat, of which a beautiful photograph is reproduced on page 142.

The exploits of the Man-Eaters of Tsavo aroused so much interest that I have devoted the opening chapter to an account of one or two of their many unrecorded and unwelcome appearances in our midst at the time of the building of the Uganda Railway.

Practically the whole of this book was written while I was suffering from the illness which I contracted in the *nyika*, so I trust that its many shortcomings will be overlooked.

J. H. P.

LONDON, *August*, 1909.

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IN THE GRIP OF THE NYIKA  
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# IN THE GRIP OF THE NYIKA

## CHAPTER I

### TSAVO REVISITED

ON the 10th October, 1907, I sailed out of Marseilles harbour, bound once again for Mombasa, the picturesque gate of that land of sun and adventure, British East Africa. Within three weeks we reached our destination and dropped anchor in the harbour of Kilindini. From this port I took train for Nairobi, the capital of the country; and at about midnight on the 1st November I awoke from a restless slumber in a Uganda Railway carriage, and found myself speeding down the incline which leads into the valley of the Tsavo, some one hundred and thirty miles from the coast.

It was with a feeling of returning to my own that I peered out of the carriage window on that star-lit night, gazing into the gloomy depths of the thorny wilderness which shuts in the iron way

at this part of the route. The unchangeable face of this expanse of sun-bleached *nyika* recalled to my memory a thousand incidents and adventures connected with the building of the railway, when it was an everyday occurrence for workmen to be seized and devoured by the two insatiable man-eating lions who at that time haunted these wilds. I have told the story of their depredations and final end in a previous volume entitled *The Man-Eaters of Tsavo*; but the details of many tragic deaths and narrow escapes remain still unrecorded, and some of these came crowding back to my mind with startling vividness as bit by bit the well-known route unfolded itself before my eyes.

It was with a shudder that I recalled, in particular, the circumstances connected with the death of a workman who was seized and devoured near here by one of the brutes. A platelayer who witnessed the whole occurrence described it to me very realistically a few hours after it had happened, and it is as gruesome a story as any that has yet been told. The victim was an Indian coolie who happened to be one of a gang sent down from Railhead to load up some building material which was required for platelaying. At this particular time the Man-Eaters had not yet made the name of Tsavo so terrible and sinister in the ears of the workmen as it





Undoubtedly the lion meant to have seized him ; but just as the brute was, as the workman graphically described it, "dancing on his legs" preparatory to a spring, a cleaner who was at work on the engine a little distance away, threw some slag on to a heap of iron rails, and this so upset the lion, that he dived under instead of into the van.

Presently the watcher on the sleeper stack saw him come out from the shadow of the van, stand for a few seconds in the open track as if undecided what to do next, and then disappear again beneath the train. He must have run along very quickly under the wagons, for a moment later he was seen standing beside the coolies' truck ; and before the watcher had time to utter another warning cry, the lion gave a spring and landed in amongst the men. As may be imagined the panic that ensued was indescribable. Shrieks, yells and terrified cries broke the silence of the night, as the powerful brute closed his jaws through the shoulder of his victim, and shaking him as a terrier would a rat, lifted him up and carried him off.

Ogilvy's servant happened to be lying next to the man who was seized, and the lion, in springing up, landed with a paw on his shoulder, driving the claws well home. The poor fellow got a terrible fright, and, thinking no doubt that his

and had come, added his cries to the general uproar which made the jungle ring for miles around. The coolie who was lying on the other side of the victim felt his comrade's body being drawn across him, and tried to save him by seizing an ankle, to which he held on until he was forced to relinquish his hold when the brute leaped over the side with his prey.

The platelayer told me that it was heartrending to hear the man's cries as he was dragged from the truck and through the jungle; nor did they cease until the crunching of his bones and the loud purring of the horrible brute, which could plainly be heard by the terrified men, proclaimed that at last his sufferings were at an end.

I may mention that the engineer who had such a lucky escape on this occasion did not long survive, as he succumbed to his fever a short time afterwards in Mombasa Hospital, where Dr. Wynstone-Waters and myself visited him and did our best to cheer him up a couple of hours before he died. Ogilvy was one of the best engineers on the railway and a right good fellow.

While I am on the subject of the Man-Eaters, I may perhaps put on record two other incidents connected with them which are of interest.

On one occasion some workmen of mine had a

narrow escape at a camp near the Tsavo Bridge. The occurrence took place at a time when the fear of the brutes had gripped hold of everybody, and the imaginative Hindu had already endowed the lions with supernatural powers.

Five Sikh carpenters had made a staging some



"FIVE SIKH CARPENTERS HAD MADE A STAGING."

eight feet high and on this had pitched their tent, where they slept in peace and, as they thought, in safety. Every night they gained access to their airy abode by means of a movable ladder, and they took the precaution, Robinson Crusoe-like, of pulling it up into their castle immediately after nightfall. I had already warned these men that their perch was not nearly high enough, and told them that they

would be much safer on the water-tank or in trees, until the iron huts which I was then building for their protection could be got ready. They did not wish to move, however, and Natha Singh, the leader of the party, assured me that they felt quite safe so high up; besides, was not *Khuda* (God) all-powerful? It seems that *Khuda* was indeed looking after them. One night, contrary to their usual custom, they carelessly left part of the ladder projecting a little way beyond the end of the staging; a hungry Man-Eater on the prowl observed this, and thinking that he could not find a meal more conveniently elsewhere, determined to try how a carpenter tasted. Calculating his spring, he leaped lightly on to the projecting ladder, which, unfortunately for him, instantly tipped up and toppled over, both falling heavily to the ground. No doubt the ladder gave him a good blow when it struck him, for he fled at once without attempting to touch the men, who, thoroughly terrified by the tearing of their tent caused by the tipping up of the ladder and believing that the lion was upon them, jumped from the staging in all directions and with terror-stricken cries raced for their lives to the nearest trees. Fortunately no one was hurt, but after this the staging was deserted for the more secure fastness of the top of a masonry pier rising out of the river bed.

On another occasion the presence of the Man-Eaters added considerably to the horrors of a collision which took place three or four miles beyond the Tsavo Bridge. By some mischance the driver of a train laden with rails and sleepers was one night given "line clear" by the Indian station-master at Tsavo, who in the press of overwork forgot that he had already telegraphed the same message to the driver of another train at Railhead.

Feeling of course thoroughly secure, the up driver put on full steam and gathered what speed he could on the steep grade from the Tsavo River, never for a moment dreaming that the train from Railhead was rushing swiftly towards him on that tortuous single track. Of course a collision was inevitable, and the usual ill-luck attended it, as the trains met round a sharp curve where it was impossible to see the headlights until too late, owing to the dense jungle which shut in the line.

Several of the trucks were hurled from the rails, and some unfortunate Indian coolies and African natives who had taken advantage of the darkness to travel in them—a thing they were not supposed to do—paid for their surreptitious ride with their lives. Others, less fortunate, were jammed between the wreckage, and had to remain there until relief was sent from Tsavo.

While they were in this terrible predicament they

were appalled by hearing the growls of the Man-Eaters gradually getting nearer and nearer. Some of the poor fellows almost lost their reason through terror, as they lay there pinned down at the mercy of the brutes; but fortunately before the lions made any actual attack, a relief gang arrived, accompanied by Dr. Brock, the medical officer, who had a busy time that night. I was especially struck with the



"SEVERAL OF THE TRUCKS WERE HURLED FROM THE RAILS."

dreadful injuries sustained by one poor Swahili porter, who had several ribs broken, an arm fractured, and in addition one of his thighs smashed to atoms half-way above the knee.

I thought it a perfectly hopeless case, but Brock took him in hand, bound up the fractures and amputated the leg. In some six weeks the man was out of hospital, and I saw him often afterwards,

quite a cheery fellow and a living monument to the clever doctor's skill.

These thoughts of my adventurous life at Tsavo were suddenly brought to an end by the train coming to a standstill at the station, and I found myself once more in the old familiar place. I must confess



"THE RAPIDS ON THE UP-STREAM SIDE."

that I looked rather anxiously at the dark side of buildings and tanks lest a lion should be lurking there ready to spring on me out of the gloom. Tsavo looked much the same as it did some eight or nine years previously, but it now lacks the excitement of the Man-Eaters, for which the Indian station-master and his staff are duly grateful.

The old romantic caravan road is, alas, used no more, and is practically obliterated with jungle growth. The site of my old palm hut and *boma* (enclosure) would be difficult to find, owing to the dense undergrowth which has enveloped everything in its tangled embrace. The river, always fresh and cool, with its palm-bordered fringe of emerald green,



"THE MORE PLACID AND BEAUTIFUL STRETCHES OF WATER."

runs merrily as ever, the rapids on the up-stream side of the bridge rushing noisily onward to the more placid and beautiful stretches of water which murmur gently the song of the Tsavo on its way to the sea. The bridge, too, stands out as clear as ever, and it can be imagined that I looked upon it once again with no little interest, remember-



ing the unusual trials and difficulties that beset us in that lonely spot while stone upon stone was being placed in position. Indeed, it may fairly be said that the gneissic blocks with which it is built were cemented together by the blood of the unfortunate victims of the Man-Eaters who terrorized the neighbourhood during its construction.

## CHAPTER II

### AT NAIROBI

• THE last hundred miles or so of the journey from Mombasa to Nairobi is especially full of interest, and it may safely be said that the view of wild life which may be obtained from the carriage windows cannot be equalled on any other railway in the world. Here, on the great Athi Plain, all kinds of game may be seen grazing away quite unconcernedly within a stone's throw of the passing train. The traveller may observe a dainty little Thomson's gazelle lift its head up from the grass, wag its tail in a friendly dog-like manner, stare for a moment or two, and then quietly resume its grazing, as if a train coming through its domain was the most natural and commonplace thing in the world. Further on a stately and beautiful Grant's gazelle will gaze steadfastly at the puffing engine as it rushes past, without showing the slightest sign of fear. Numbers of hartebeeste dot the plain on each side of the line,

and one of these will probably indulge in a race alongside the track just to show how fast he can go in spite of his ungainly appearance. I have also seen a troop of zebra gallop up to look inquisitively at the train, snort defiance at it and then wheel round and disappear in a cloud of dust, kicking their heels



"A STATELY AND BEAUTIFUL GRANT'S GAZELLE."

in the air. At certain times in the year, wildebeeste abound on this great expanse and enliven the scene by their curious antics, while it is not at all rare to surprise a herd of giraffes close to the line. It is true that rhinos no longer charge the engine with sad results to themselves, nor do lions spring into a

carriage as they used to do occasionally in the early days, but these are perhaps attractions that the traveller would prefer to dispense with; and even without such excitements he will find much to interest him in the wild life of all kinds by which he is surrounded.

Soon after my arrival in Nairobi I began to make



"RHINOS NO LONGER CHARGE THE ENGINE WITH SAD RESULTS TO THEMSELVES."

preparations for a short journey to the eastward which would take me to that part of the Ukambani Province known as the Kitui district. I may perhaps mention that for administrative purposes the Protectorate of East Africa is divided into seven provinces, and of these Ukambani is one of the most

important, as on the western verge of it Nairobi, the official capital of the country, is situated. The inhabitants are called Wakamba, and are spread more or less over the whole province. Not very many are to be seen, however, about Nairobi, as in their densely populated villages round the Machakos hills, a few marches to the eastward, they contrive



"NAIROBI, THE OFFICIAL CAPITAL."

to produce all the necessities of life, and for more than these they as yet show but little ambition.

The Wakamba are a numerous agricultural tribe, with keen instincts for travel and barter. They are good hunters and fighters, their weapons being the bow and poisoned arrow, in the use of which they are so expert that they have more than once inflicted a crushing defeat on their hated

**F**emies, the Masai. On one occasion, some twelve years or so ago, the latter made a raid on this tribe, in its mountain fastnesses and captured a number of cattle, but failed to get clear of the hills before they were overtaken and surrounded. Every rock on the sides of the defiles gave security to a bowman, who rained a shower of arrows on the doomed Masai spearmen as they strove in vain to break through with their spoil. The invaders were slaughtered to a man, and the result of the victory was that the Masai never again attempted a foray among the mountains where the Wakamba dwell.

Nearly all the people of this tribe file their teeth to a point, which gives them a peculiar and not over pleasing appearance. The men marry as many wives as they can afford to pay for, as the more wives they have, the less work they do. Like nearly all other native tribes they are very superstitious, and have great faith in the Witch Doctor. The tribe is split up into many small family clans, which are independent of each other and acknowledge no sway beyond that of the petty chieftain of the village. Were it not for this complete lack of cohesion and discipline, the Wakamba would, I am convinced, have made a deep mark on East African native history.

There were no reliable maps to be had of this country, so as guides for my journey I engaged two

Masai youths, named Abbudi and Mellauw, who had been acting as scouts in the district for some time and therefore knew the way thoroughly. They were both very bright and intelligent, and soon became great favourites of mine.

Abbudi especially proved himself most useful and amusing. He was full of information about the country, so I always took him with me everywhere; he used to stride along by my horse's side, recounting unending, and to me most entertaining stories about his interesting nation, the Masai. I shall have to mention him constantly when relating what befell us on this trip and on another longer expedition which I subsequently made to the Northern Game Reserve beyond the Guaso Nyiro. Abbudi was a rather good-looking youth and but for his prominent teeth, which are characteristic of the Masai, would have been quite handsome. I gathered a good deal of useful information from him, but found that many of his statements had to be taken with a grain of salt. It is a strange but undoubted fact that no wild native ever seems to be capable of telling the exact truth, for he has a way of suiting his statements to his audience, and saying what he thinks will please and make a good impression.

Personally I can quite bear out the remarks made by Lieutenant-General von Liebert, formerly

governor of German East Africa, at the meeting of the German Colonial Society held at Dresden in June of this year. During the discussion as to the advisability of administering the oath to natives, General von Liebert said: "As far as the oath



"ABURUDI WAS A RATHER GOOD-LOOKING YOUTH."

was concerned a native could be easily induced to say anything. All that was necessary was to wink with the left or the right eye, according to circumstances."

In addition to the two Masai guides, I of course



engaged a number of porters to carry food, tents, &c. I was also fortunately able to buy a horse that I knew well, as he had been ridden by a friend who was with me on a shooting trip through Laikipia a couple of years previously. He was called Aladdin, and was a beautiful white Arab, with arched neck



"ALADDIN . . . . A BEAUTIFUL WHITE ARAB."

and long flowing tail, fleetfooted as a gazelle. He was, however, rather timid and nervous when going through bush country, so much so that if even a bird fluttered out of a tree, he would give a great jump and bound away with a terrified snort. Poor Aladdin! He must have been aware of the danger which lurked among the bushes, and perhaps

I have had some premonition of what his own sad and untimely end was to be—but this is another story, and will be told in a later chapter.

It was now the favourite shooting season in East Africa, and numbers of sportsmen were arriving from England. Among these were Mr. and Mrs. S. and Captain and Mrs. P., who brought with them letters of introduction from mutual friends. As they were anxious to set out for a shoot in the same direction as that in which I was going, we decided to join forces, and travel together for part of the way at any rate.

Our *safari*<sup>1</sup> consisted of a motley crowd of men, horses, mules and donkeys. As is usual, the morning fixed for the start was a very busy one. The porters whom we had engaged all came crowding round, clamouring for their advance of pay, blankets, *posho* (food), &c. Their names had to be entered on a roll, and some of these were most amusing—such as *Punda* (donkey), *Pōw* (rhino), *Kazi moto* (hot worker), *Kazi mbaya* (bad worker), *Nussu rupeca* (half rupee), *Nyumbu* (mule), and a host of other similar ones, given for some well-marked or

<sup>1</sup> This word *safari* is no doubt derived from the Arabic “safir,” a journey. In Swahili, however, it means not only a journey but everything connected with it, including men, animals, equipment, &c.

<sup>2</sup> The caravan porter always uses the word *foru* for rhino, and not *kifaru*, as given in the Swahili text-books.

well-known peculiarity. The usual fighting for the lightest loads then took place, and order had to be restored by the Headman. Each porter was given out a number on a tin disc attached to a string, and this was slung round his neck. The number corresponded to that on the load he had to carry, so that in this way a check could be kept on each individual carrier. Of course a good *pagazi* (porter) makes it a point of honour never to throw down or part from his load, no matter how tired or thirsty he may be; but then it is a rare thing to get a *safari* together without having included in it a few first-rate scoundrels who have been guilty of nearly every crime in the calendar. Many of these draw half a month's pay and a couple of days' food in advance, and then desert at the first opportunity, taking their load with them if they think it is of any value, or pitching it into the bush if they have no use for it.

At last, when everything was satisfactorily settled and the chaos reduced to some semblance of order, the porters were all formed up in a line with their loads in front of them. When everything was ready, the Headman shouted "*Hāya bandika, bandika*," and the men picked up their loads, placed them on their heads, and marched off in single file towards the first camping-place—to the accompaniment of weird

shouts and screams, some of the men making great leaps into the air and others beating their boxes with sticks, to let the whole country know what fine fellows they were and that they were off on a *safari*.



"THE MULES . . . HAD MEANWHILE BEEN LOADED UP  
WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY."

When the mules and donkeys, which had meanwhile been loaded up with great difficulty, came to take their places in the long line, the sound of the wild shouting so excited the animals that they began to kick and buck and fling

their loads to the ground in all directions, thereby adding greatly to the uproar.

The first march is always made a short one, so as to give the men and beasts a proper chance of becoming accustomed to their loads and settling down into their places. In this case our camping



"OUR CAMPING GROUND WAS ONLY SEVEN MILES DISTANT."

ground was only seven miles distant, and when the *safari* had been sent on ahead, we arranged to meet there later in the day. But as we did not all start together from Nairobi, the result was that two of the party (Captain and Mrs. P.) did not turn up at the rendezvous, owing, as it turned out, to an unfortunate misunderstanding as to the position of the camping ground,

When the day wore on and they did not appear, we began to get concerned for their safety and sent *askaris* (armed porters) all over the country to look for them. As their *safari* had arrived with ours at the meeting place, we knew that they would be without food or shelter for the night, and this caused us great anxiety, especially on Mrs. P.'s account. While we were looking through our glasses in the gathering dusk, scanning the country for any sign of our friends, we spied a herd of hartebeeste feeding towards a little hollow some distance away. Mrs. S. immediately proposed a stalk, so off we set without delay, and after negotiating a river, crept on all-fours over some rocky ground until we got fairly close to the herd. Mrs. S. then crawled forward alone to the verge of the hollow, and picking out in the gloom the best head she could find, covered the beast with her rifle and fired her first shot in East Africa. Instantly there was a kick and a buck, a gallop for about fifty yards, and then the beast fell with a crash, stone dead. We all tendered our hearty congratulations to the skilful *shikari*, and hoped that her success was a good omen for our journey.

## CHAPTER III

### ON SAFARI

It was quite dark by the time we got back to the tents, and as there was no sign of our friends we had a great fire made, and all night long at intervals the *askaris* discharged their rifles to guide them in case they should be wandering about near at hand, and yet not able to find the way to camp. At daybreak next morning they were still missing, so we concluded that they had returned to Nairobi and would join us at the next camp when they got news of us. We therefore decided to push forward to a place called Murra-med-et, on the right bank of the Nairobi river, some eight miles or so further on, and send back word to our friends of our whereabouts.

Our route lay through an open tract of grassy country on the northern verge of the Athi Plains. As we were riding along I noticed something stalking through the grass, so, thinking it was a leopard,

I called my friends' attention to it. On spying through our glasses, however, we discovered that it was a serval cat, which Mrs. S. immediately stalked and bowled over. When we went to pick it up it suddenly sprang to its feet, made a great arch of its back and spat furiously at us, but a timely bullet killed it outright and prevented it from doing any damage. Soon afterwards, as we were marching along towards camp with the skin of the cat stretched over a porter's load to dry in the sun, we suddenly came upon a deserted baby hartebeeste lying desolate and hungry-looking in the grass. It had evidently been left by its mother all alone on the Plains to take care of itself—or of course it is quite possible that the mother may have been killed and eaten during the night by a lion or other beast of prey. Although it was only a tiny youngster, it gave us a good chase on our horses before we finally captured it. As we had no means of giving the pretty little creature fresh milk, without which it would have died, we had it carried by one of the porters, so that we might hand it over to the owner of the first farm we should come across to keep for us until our return, when we hoped to take it along with us to Nairobi.

We reached Murra-med-et about mid-day, and found that our camping-place was just beside a beautiful waterfall, where the Nairobi river plunges



some forty or fifty feet down into a beautiful basin, all covered with green trees, shrubs, and creepers. Indeed, Abbudi informed me that the name Murramed-et means "Falling Water" in Masai. Early in the afternoon I observed a horseman riding towards our camp, and from him we at last got



"OUR CAMPING-PLACE WAS JUST BESIDE A BEAUTIFUL WATERFALL."

news of our missing friends. It turned out that they had taken a wrong turning, and had spent the night without food in the jungle, and were now a good many miles away, sadly in need of their *safari*. We at once sent their porters and camp kit across country to them in charge of the horseman, and under the guidance of Mellauw, the Masai, who

I knew this part of the country well. I heard on the return of the guide that they reached Capt. and Mrs. P. late that night ; but our *safaris* never afterwards reunited, nor did I see our friends again until we met a short time ago in London, when I listened with much interest to a very graphic account of their adventurous and successful trip in East Africa.

We were astir at dawn next morning, and before setting off on the day's march made our way over to the beautiful waterfall, taking our cameras with us, as we were all anxious to secure a photograph of the pleasing scene. We were quite ready to take the picture just as the first rays of the sun struck the gleaming waters as they dashed headlong into the turbulent pool beneath. It was a very pretty sight, and the photograph which I reproduce gives but a poor idea of what it was really like.

Just as we were about to start off on our journey, we had a rather amusing experience with some of our men. We had brought with us two Somali gunbearers and an Abyssinian sycc, and a more lazy and unsatisfactory trio it has never been my lot to meet. We were highly entertained and pleased, therefore, when just as we were about to move off, these three men came up and announced that they would not travel with us any further unless they got tea, sugar, milk, and butter, just the same as the

*Bwanas* (masters); and, in addition to the boy who was already provided to carry their kit and tent, they actually demanded a second boy to wait on them! Without more ado we paid them their two days' wages and dismissed them on the spot. They looked exceedingly taken aback at this, as of course they believed that we could not possibly get on without them, and fully expected us to comply with their impudent demands. It was a comical sight to watch their crestfallen expression as we marched cheerily away, leaving them on the deserted plain to carry their own kit back to Nairobi. I do not think that they will forget the lesson in a hurry, or attempt again to dictate terms to a sportsman in the wilds.

We made but a short march along the right bank of the Nairobi, which we followed to its junction with the Athi at a place called by the Masai Mdoum-too-a-Guaso. The Athi river runs north here through a deep gorge, and we found the passage rather difficult to negotiate, as we had to clamber down one boulder-strewn side and then up the other, which was as steep as the side of a haystack. By about noon we had our camp pitched on the eastern or right bank, on a site which gave us a splendid view of the surrounding country. A poisonous snake killed on the way was our only trophy.

Our little captured hartebeeste had been carried

on this march in spite of its vigorous struggles to escape, but when we reached the junction of the Nairobi and the Athi, we left it at a prosperous ranch close by. The hospitable owner himself happened to be away at the time, but his agent kindly undertook the care of it for us until we should call for it on our return journey.

As there was plenty of game in this neighbourhood, S. and Mrs. S. went out to try their luck and succeeded in bagging a couple of trophies, while I went towards the Machakos hills to explore the country and make notes. We all joined forces before dusk, and as we were riding back to camp in the darkness I saw an animal, which I took to be a lion, crouching in our path some ten yards ahead. Shouting "Look out!" I levelled my rifle without dismounting and fired. The noise and flash frightened the beast whatever it was, but from the clumsy way in which it galloped off, I came to the conclusion that it was an ant-bear, an animal only seen at dusk or on a moonlight night, and but rarely even then. Indeed in all my travels and wanderings both by day and night, I only once previously came across an ant-bear, and that was near Bloemfontein during the Boer War.

Next morning we started off from Mdoum-too-a-Guaso soon after sunrise and marched through the plain, among large herds of antelope and zebra

which we left undisturbed. We halted for breakfast under the south-eastern brow of El Donyo Sabuk (Masai for "Great Mountain") and then continued our journey in a north-easterly direction through a delightfully wooded piece of country abounding in game of all kinds, great and small, until after marching for about 15 miles we



"BREAKFAST UNDER THE SOUTH-EASTERN BROW OF EL DONYO SABUK."

reached a stream called by the Wakamba, Kat-cimachuko.

On the way we had a most exciting hunt after a grand specimen of the roan antelope. We saw him first when we were among some trees, but he at the same time saw us and bolted for the open country as hard as he could go, while we galloped madly after

him on our ponies in an endeavour to keep him in view. We halted on reaching the edge of the trees, and had the satisfaction of seeing the roan come to a standstill in the midst of an open glade about 700 yards away. There was a large clump of bushes, some 200 yards beyond us, which by a little manœuvring we managed to place between him and ourselves. Under cover of this we made a rapid advance on foot, but of course we dared not expose ourselves to take a peep at him all the time we were covering this distance, in case he should see us. Accordingly it was with no little anxiety that we spied through the branches on reaching the covert, to see if our quarry had stood his ground. We thought ourselves lucky when we saw the magnificent creature standing there watching the forest suspiciously, all unconscious that he was even then being covered with a rifle. A shot was fired, but unfortunately the distance was underestimated and the bullet fell short, so off he sped again, and as soon as our horses came up we followed after him as hard as ever we could, hoping for the chance of another shot. He managed however to make good his escape and we never saw him again. Later in the day we came upon a female roan which offered an exceedingly easy mark at 50 yards' range, but of course we had no intention of interfering with her.

We also had a very exciting chase after a waterbuck, which seemed to possess a fine head; but he too managed to elude us in the dense scrub of a dry watercourse, without so much as a shot being fired at him.

At our camp at the Katcimachuko we were visited by some Wakamba from a village close by. They were very much interested in us and brought us news of the game in the locality: in particular they told us where some buffalo and rhino were to be found.

After a short rest I started off to explore the surrounding country and had a most interesting and adventurous afternoon. I was mounted as usual on Aladdin and accompanied by my two Masai, Abbudi and Mellauw. I saw plenty of game in all directions, and on my way passed quite close by and watched a cow rhino with her little baby a few days old beside her, which looked very much like a large pig.

Soon afterwards my progress was barred by a deep ravine with very steep and precipitous sides. As it would have been impossible to take a horse down where I struck it, I walked along the edge for some distance until at last I found an animal path, which we could just manage to negotiate to the bottom, although it was somewhat precipitous and narrow.

Mellauw went down first, I followed, and last of all came Abbudi leading Aladdin. The ravine was a wide one—at least thirty yards across at the bottom—and was covered with dense bush. When we got down Mellauw was just about to force his way through this undergrowth when he suddenly stopped and whispered to me, "*Bwana, fow!*" ("Master, a rhino!"). I asked under my breath, "*Wapi?*" ("Where?"), and he replied in a frightened undertone, "*Hapa, karibu sana*" ("Here, just beside us").

There was not room enough to turn Aladdin, so I signalled to Abbudi to back him up the side of the ravine, while Mellauw and I quickly scrambled to what safety we could secure behind a tree. Here we waited for the expected charge of the now disturbed and suspicious brute. I held my rifle ready and we hardly dared breathe while we listened to his angry snorts and watched Abbudi and Aladdin slowly making their way backwards towards the summit. Very luckily for us the wind was blowing strongly from the rhino in our direction. Had it been the reverse, he would undoubtedly have scented us and charged while we were all in the narrow path—possibly killing or maiming the lot, as there was no way of escape. As it was, he stood undecided for a few moments, sniffing and snorting loudly; and then, not being able



to make us out, he crashed off out of the ravine in the opposite direction. I was hugely relieved and pleased to see his broad black back show now and again through the scrub as he swiftly made his way up the far bank of the nullah and disappeared into the bush.

It was a good lesson, but the experience might have been too dearly bought. Never again shall I go down a precipitous narrow track into a bush-covered ravine in the wilds, without first assuring myself by much stone-throwing and hallooing that there is no dangerous beast lurking at the bottom waiting to give me a possibly too-warm reception.

My afternoon's adventures were not yet over. I continued on my way for another hour, making notes of the country and the game. I then saw a very fine waterbuck, which I started to stalk; and so intent was I in manœuvring to get a shot, that I very nearly walked into a rhino that was standing behind a thick bush which I was making use of to cover my advance on the waterbuck. The huge beast soon attracted my attention pretty forcibly, for just as I approached the bush, out it dashed from behind its covert and charged viciously at me. I only had my '303 loaded with a soft bullet, but I was lucky enough to break the brute's leg as it came for me, tumbling it completely over. I then

fired several more bullets into the beast, wishing I had a heavier rifle to put it out of pain more speedily. It was with no little joy therefore that just at this moment I saw S. come rushing up with his heavy rifle, with which he quickly gave the brute its quietus.

Hardly had I time to comment on his opportune arrival when out of the scrub rushed another rhino, and came for us like a steam engine! S. very quickly and calmly planted a .450 bullet somewhere in his anatomy which gave him a sudden distaste for our society, so he quickly turned off and disappeared in the direction of the Athi river. I then found time to ask S. how it was he managed to appear just at the right moment, and he told me he had been hunting close by and on hearing my shots rushed up to see what was happening.

We then went and looked at the dead rhino, and found it was a female well stricken in years. It was too late to do anything with it, so we determined to let it remain where it was for the night. Early next morning we took a number of porters and sallied forth to cut it up for camp meat. On nearing the spot where it lay we noticed about a score of Wakamba, with long knives and quaint antediluvian little axes, speeding along a parallel track, all intent on securing a rhino steak. It was well that we had made an early start, for had these

men got to the kill before us there would not have been a morsel of that much-prized meat left for the *safari*. Of course we did not let them touch the carcase until our men had cut off all the meat *they could carry*; but even then there was enough left on the huge bones to start a fierce quarrel among



"LOVES TO MAKE HIMSELF A RUDE SHELTER."

the ravenous Wakamba, who all this time had sat eyeing the dead beast like so many vultures. The true savagery of the native of this part of Africa comes to the fore when he is engaged in hacking off lumps of flesh from a slaughtered beast. The demon-like expression of ferocity that comes over his countenance when he sees

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a hated rival secure a coveted tit-bit of still quivering flesh is a sight to be remembered. Indeed I have more than once seen a desperate fight with knives take place over the possession of a toothsome morsel. When he has secured a good haul of meat, the native loves to make himself a rude shelter, in which to gorge to his heart's content and watch the sun dry up such strips of flesh as he is unable to devour at the moment.

## CHAPTER IV

### ON THE YATTA PLATEAU

BEFORE leaving Nairobi we had been told by people with a knowledge of these parts that *posho* could be obtained without any difficulty from the Wakamba. We did not therefore take more than a week's supply with us, as of course the smaller the number of loads of food carried, the fewer porters we required. We were now on the borders of an inhabited district, so I sent some men with an *askari* to a local chief named Ngai with money enough to buy half-a-dozen loads of beans, of which we were running short. I was told by a native of these parts that it would take two days for the porters to bring the food, so I employed the interval in rambling about the country making notes and sketches, while my friends did some shooting and secured good specimens of impala, bushbuck, and waterbuck. One day, while stalking a rhino, S. came suddenly upon a buffalo as it emerged from

a thicket, but before he could make up his mind as to which of the two was the finer trophy, both disappeared into the bush. However, had he only known it, he should not have hesitated in choosing the buffalo, as we saw but few traces of these animals during our trip, while rhinos were much too numerous to be at all pleasant.

While at this camp three of my Wakikuyu porters took it into their heads to desert, and so left me with three important loads which had to be carried by hook or by crook. I was luckily able to get three Wakamba to replace the deserters. I have always found the Wakikuyu porter to be most unreliable, and from moment to moment one can never tell when he may suddenly pitch his load aside and disappear into the bush.

On the evening of the second day the porters returned with only a single bag of beans, but they brought back an improbable tale of how the chief Ngai was collecting food for us, and would himself meet us with it if we marched towards his village. I had very little faith in this story, as I knew that natives will promise anything, although well aware at the same time that there is not the remotest chance of their promises being fulfilled; nor do they evince the very least shame or contrition when they are proved to be the most flagrant liars.

In any case, however, we had to pass Ngai's

village on our way to Kitui, as we had to march that way to reach a ford over the Athi river, which again barred our path. It was now flowing in a south-easterly direction after having taken a great circuit round the northern slopes of El Donyo Sabuk. On our way to the ford we passed through several villages, from which most of the women and children fled on our approach. They were evidently unaccustomed to white men in these parts, although it is so near to Nairobi.

As I marched along at the head of the *safari*, I noticed by the side of the path, and awaiting our approach, a group of natives under the leadership of a tall old man, who looked a very striking and picturesque, though rather incongruous figure, with a bright red blanket wrapped round him, a white helmet, similar to that worn by the troops in India, tilted well back on his head, a very large and battered umbrella tucked under his left arm in the latest Piccadilly style, and a formidable Masai spear grasped in his right hand. This turned out to be Ngai.

In addition to his male following he was accompanied by two of his wives, who carried food for their lord, and also a present for us in the shape of a parcel of beans made up in a native-made and neatly-woven matting bag. As I had all along more or less suspected would be the case, Ngai

brought no food for the *safari*, in spite of all his lavish promises, and he seemed to expect that I would be appeased by the small handful he had given us as a present. When he saw that I was very angry with him for having sent me a false message, he sent back one of his wives with three of the Wakamba to bring some loads of *posho*.



"THIS TURNED OUT TO BE NGAI."

from his village, while he himself offered to lead us to the ford over the Athi.

As we marched along he soon got tired of carrying his heavy spear, so handed it to his wife and took from her a curiously made little three-legged stool on which he sat whenever we made a short halt. This wife also carried a baby of two or three



months old slung on her back by means of a cowskin bag. It was a wretched little piece of humanity, and howled piteously most of the time, which was a thing not to be wondered at considering its most uncomfortable position. Why it was not smothered is a mystery to me. The mother appealed to us to cure it of fever and colic, so we did the best we could, but with what success I know not, as it was still wailing plaintively when we parted company some days afterwards.

We crossed the river in safety, and then climbed the escarpment which for many miles bounds it on the left bank, and pitched our tents under some shady trees on the Yatta Plateau. All the water had to be brought up here from the Athi, much to the disgust of the porters, who wished to camp down by the river, regardless of the crowds of mosquitoes which had their abode there among the tall reeds and grass lining the banks.

In the afternoon I went out again to explore the surrounding country, accompanied only by Abbudi and Mellauw. When I had gone some little distance, I saw, about a quarter of a mile away, a weather-beaten and battle-scarred old rhino with fairly good horns, standing complacently under a tree, apparently enjoying an afternoon siesta. Now, my friends had never shot a rhino, and were, of course, most anxious to bag one. I thought, there-

fore, that this was a splendid opportunity, so I sent Mellaauw at his best speed back to camp to tell them to come out quickly and bring their heavy rifles with them to try their luck.

Meanwhile, I sat down in the shade for about half an hour and awaited their arrival. Presently the old rhino awoke from his reverie, and sauntering leisurely out from under the tree, began to graze away quite peacefully in the open, little dreaming of the fate which was to befall him so soon. By the time S. and Mrs. S. arrived he had got among some ant-hills, which gave us a splendid opportunity of stalking him. We got to within fifty yards of him unobserved, the wind being in the right quarter. Then lying prone under cover of an ant-hill, Mrs. S. waited for a favourable movement to get in a shoulder shot. I inwardly prayed that the wind might not veer round and so reveal our presence to him, as of course he would then have charged down on us like a thunderbolt. At last, after what seemed an age, he presented his shoulder and instantly the rifle rang out and toppled him over, practically stone dead. It was a very well-placed shot, as the great beast barely gave a kick after he fell.

All the same, the gun-bearers and boys were much too terrified to go up to the prostrate brute, as they are always in deadly fear of a rhino. It

was not until I had ridden closely all round him and assured them that he was really quite dead, that they ventured to approach the fallen beast, and even then only after having thrown stones at him for some time. When at last two or three did summon up sufficient courage to go up and touch



"THEY VENTURED TO APPROACH THE FALLEN BEAST."

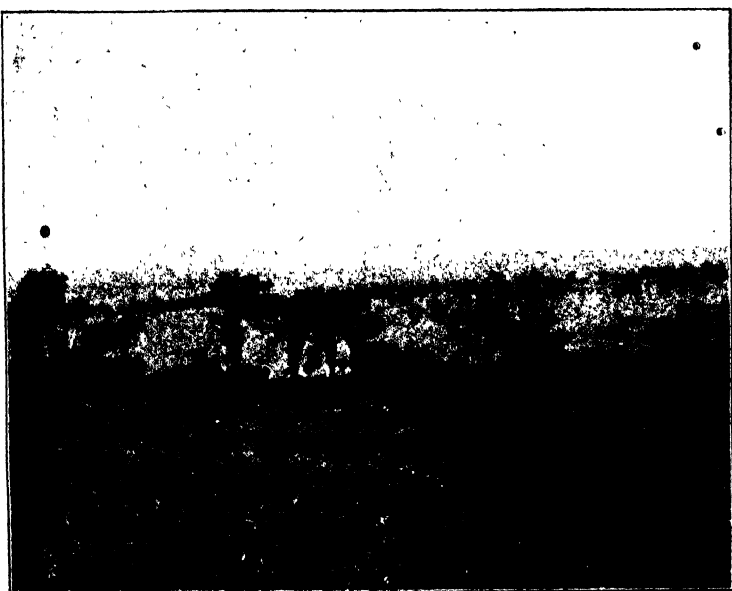
his head, I suddenly gave a loud snort, imitating a rhino as well as I could. Instantly all fled with wild yells, to the huge amusement of the more cautious majority, who enjoyed the joke tremendously.

. While the men were engaged in skinning and cutting up the rhino, we spied another one a little

distance away, so as we did not wish to shoot it, I proposed that we should go and try to take its photograph. We got fairly close to it, but the grass was so long that it was still impossible to secure a successful snapshot from where we were. It was rather risky for all three of us to approach any nearer, as there was no place of refuge except a single tree which was a little beyond where the rhino was and rather to the left of him. I thought, therefore, that it was better to leave my friends where they were, and go on alone to try and take the picture, as there was less chance of him seeing one than three. I was getting along beautifully when unfortunately, just as I got almost close enough to take a snapshot, the rhino spotted me and promptly charged. I made for the tree for all I was worth, pursued by the angry brute, and luckily reached it in good time. The rhino then stopped in mid career and made off in the opposite direction, so I did not get his photograph after all.

I was more fortunate, however, on another occasion, when I made a picture-stalk on a couple of rhino that were grazing in the open, near a solitary tree. I must confess that I approached them with fear and trembling, all the time wondering if they would spot me, and if so, whether I could get to the tree without being caught by one or other of

them, if they should take it into their heads to charge. I had no rifle with me, as it would have been too awkward to carry with my camera while wriggling along in the grass. In spite, however, of all the care which I took to avoid being seen, the rhino spotted me just as I stood up to take



"I TOOK THE PHOTOGRAPH AS THEY WERE ON THE RUN."

the picture. I was intently watching them reflected in the finder of my camera, when I suddenly observed them moving rapidly and, as I thought, towards me. On looking up, however, I was much relieved to find that they were going in the opposite direction, and I took the photograph as they were on the run.

## CHAPTER V

### A FRUITLESS LION HUNT

OUR march across the Yatta Plateau to the Kwamutuku stream was a short one of only about nine miles. It was a delightful country to ride through, and every yard of the route proved interesting. On the way we were charged viciously, but without damage, by several rhino; indeed we saw in all no less than ten of these interesting and quaint-looking animals on this short stretch of our route. The country for the most part was undulating, beautifully grassy, and interspersed here and there with groves of trees, through which game of various kinds could be seen moving about. I counted roughly some 300 kongoni (hartebeeste), about fifty zebra, and ten waterbuck, but I only observed two Thomson's gazelle, and did not see a single specimen of the beautiful and graceful Grant's gazelle.

At our camp on the Kwamutuku we were visited

by a second Wakamba chief with about a dozen of his people. He promised to bring any food we wanted, so I decided to wait here another day.

While rambling round the vicinity in the afternoon I came upon an old deserted *boma* with a few sharp stakes set up inside it; this led me to speculate as



"INTERSPERSED HERE AND THERE WITH GROVES OF TREES."

to what they could be for, and I wondered if it could be a cunning native trap of some kind. I remembered a curious incident that occurred some years ago at a place called Kew, where an engineer was encamped inside a somewhat similar *boma*. As a rule a fire was lighted in the enclosure every night, but on one particular evening the engineer happened

to be away, so the place was left in darkness. The wood for the fire, however, was all in place, and in the heap by chance was an upright sharp stake. Soon after nightfall a lion, seeking what he might devour, jumped into the *boma*, and by an unlucky accident for himself landed fair on the upright stake, which went clean through his body. The beast managed to drag himself out through the bushes, but was found dead just outside on the following morning, with the stake sticking through him.

In a country such as this, abounding as it did with so much game, lions were sure to be numerous, and we had ample evidence of this fact soon after darkness set in, as we heard them roaring in all directions round our camp. S. and I therefore planned an expedition for the following morning, while we still sat in the glow of the camp fire and listened to the music of the wilds as voiced by these majestic animals. Accordingly, at about 4 a.m. we started off, he on his mule, and I mounted on Aladdin. We marched in practically a northerly direction, following to the best of our ability the sound of a roaring lion. We were, of course, accompanied by Abuddi and a couple of gun-bearers, while about a mile behind us, so that they might not frighten the game, marched a dozen porters to carry back to camp any meat or trophies that we might shoot.



In this way we progressed very slowly in the misty moonshine until dawn began to 'break, when all at once we discovered that we were right in the midst of a herd of about 200 zebra. They seemed more curious than startled at our sudden appearance, and gave S. an easy shot, so that he 'was enabled to bring down his first zebra.

Leaving a man to take the skin off and cut up the meat, which is considered delicious by the porters on account of the abundance of fat, we pushed on ahead, still following the roar of the lion; but when we had gone on another half mile or so we found that we were quite unable to locate the direction from which the muffled sound came. It seemed to be now to the right of us, now to the left of us, now in front of us. We therefore agreed to separate, having first marked out a conical hill as a meeting-place later on. I gave S. his choice and he took the left-hand route, while I made a detour to the right.

I continued my way along devious animal tracks and byways, up and down banks and among nullahs, through woods and over hillocks, and at last arrived at the landmark agreed upon without having seen anything of importance. Here I waited some considerable time for S., but as he did 'not turn up I thought I would go on a little further. From the hillock on which I stood I could see the

edge of what looked like an escarpment stretching away to the east, so I made up my mind to go and see what the valley beneath contained. I left a man with instructions to wait for an hour in case S. should arrive, so that he might direct him to me.

Taking with me Abbudi and my gun-bearer, I rode off and in a little time approached the edge of the Yatta Plateau where it descends precipitously to the valley below, thus forming an abrupt boundary to this wide expanse of plain that stretches away to the horizon. Of course, I dismounted before reaching the edge of this precipice and walked quietly towards it, taking cover behind a rock, so as not to disturb any game that might be in sight. On looking over, I was rewarded by the magnificent view which met my eyes. A lovely stretch of broad valley unfolded itself beneath me, bathed in soft but brilliant morning sunshine. Standing out boldly, and apparently about half a score of miles away, juttied up some gigantic and curiously castle-like rocks. I looked longingly at these and wanted very badly to go and explore them, especially as I heard the short sharp grunts of a lioness coming from somewhere in their direction, accompanied now and again by the more majestic roar of her mate.

Just at the bottom of the escarpment grazed a large herd of Coke's hartebeeste. As I had approached so cautiously, they were wholly unaware of my presence

and grazed away quite unsuspectingly beneath me, although I could almost have hit any one of them with a stone. Further afield, but at no very great distance, I counted three black objects moving about, which with the aid of my glasses I made out to be rhino.



COKE'S HARTEBEESTE.

Herds of zebra, hartebeeste, Grant's and Thomson's gazelle, and a few eland were also scattered about here and there, giving life to a particularly pleasing scene.

I did not of course attempt to disturb the hartebeeste directly underneath me, but contented myself with watching them, and the other animals, in their

native haunts. Neither did I try to climb down the escarpment, for it was now getting late and I was anxious to find S. if possible and return to camp, as we had been on the move since 4 a.m. Just as I was about to mount Aladdin and set off in quest of my companion, I heard the report of a rifle close by, and on riding up found S., who had shot and knocked over a very good impala, but had had no other adventures worth speaking of since we separated, neither had he seen any trace of the lions we had come out to seek.

As some of the porters with me belonged to the Kikuyu nation they petitioned me to shoot a kongoni, as they would not touch zebra, of which the Swahili are so fond, and the impala just killed would not be sufficient to go round. I therefore stalked an old bull hartebeeste which they pointed out to me, and brought him down with a bullet rather far back in the body. He got up again, however, hobbled off and broke into a run, so Abbudi flew after him—all the joy of being able to get a thrust with his spear, in the approved Masai manner, showing in his exulting face. The hartebeeste gave him a good long run, more or less in a circle, so that I was able to watch everything that happened. At last, when the ungainly antelope was beginning to get tired, it turned and faced him. This manoeuvre checked Abbudi for a moment,

and made him adopt more cautious tactics. He tried his utmost to work round to the animal's flank, but the wily old hartebeeste was too artful for this, and wherever Abbudi went he always found the head of the kongoni facing him ; indeed, once or twice the latter made one or two sharp charges which caused Abbudi to take nimbly to his heels. Eventually the poor hartebeeste seemed suddenly to get very weak and tottered to his knees, still facing his enemy. This happened just at the moment I came up, intending to give him a finishing shot. Abbudi, however, instantly saw his chance, and the long bright blade of his spear shot suddenly out and appeared to go through the beast as easily as if he had been made of butter. The thrust evidently pierced the heart, for without another struggle the gallant old kongoni turned over with a groan, gave a couple of tremors, rolled up his eyes and remained quite still.

It always makes me feel unhappy to see a beast die, especially if he has made a good fight for his life, as this one did. Of course, if the animal is killed outright at the first shot, he is dead before he can realize what is happening, and can feel little or no pain. If, however, the shot merely breaks a leg and the animal goes off limping, all my sympathy is aroused, and I am not easy in my mind again until the poor beast has been put out of its misery.



“THE RAVENUS LEANS AGAINST THE FLESH OF THE STILL-LIVING GAZELLE.”

The swift death which is, as a rule, meted out by the sportsman inflicts, after all, but little pain compared with the suffering which the poor weak creatures of the wilds have often to endure when they fall into the pitiless clutches of a voracious beast of prey. As an example of this, I may perhaps mention an instance which a friend of mine, Mr. C. Rawson, actually witnessed. He was out shooting one day on the Athi Plains when he wounded a Grant's gazelle. The animal managed to get away from him, so he quickly followed it up to finish it off. Meanwhile a lean and hungry-looking hyæna sprang out of the grass and joined in the chase, eventually catching up with the gazelle and pulling it down. The hyæna did not waste any time in attempting to kill the gazelle, but, putting a strong paw on its quarters to hold it down, proceeded to tear great pieces of flesh from the unfortunate creature's flank. Rawson arrived at this moment and fired at the hyæna, which he hit far back in the spine, totally disabling the brute's hind-quarters. In spite of this the ravenous beast continued to eat the flesh of the still living gazelle, nor did he stop for a moment until a second shot killed him outright.

Mr. Rawson took a photograph of the pair exactly as they lay, which he has kindly given me permission to reproduce (see p. 57).

## CHAPTER VI

### CHASED BY A RHINO

THAT night the camp was much disturbed, not with a roaring lion but with the chief's yelling baby, so next morning I told Ngai, who was still with us, that he and his wife and child had better return home to their own village, at the foot of the Kanjalu hills. The old fellow had been instrumental in procuring for us some half-dozen loads of food, and although this was much less than we had been led to expect, we were forced to make a virtue of necessity and appear to be content with the short supply.

Before the chief and his family left us we gave to each a small present, as a token of our goodwill. Ngai, who was a keen lover of tobacco, went into ecstasies over a supply which S. gave him; the old man seemed quite loath to part with us, and gave us a most cordial invitation to his village when next we should pass that way.



We were not sorry to leave the camp on the Kwamutuku, as the water in the holes in the bed of the stream was very brackish, and the mosquitoes and ticks were most troublesome. Under the guidance of a couple of local natives we continued our journey in an easterly direction towards the Karusi river, which we were told was a short distance ahead of us. The country we rode over continued to be beautifully grassy and undulating, with numerous trees scattered about here and there. S. walked through the long grass and alternately handled his rifle and shot gun, according as a rhino or a fat little quail was put up. A considerable quantity of game was to be seen in all directions, and the whole march was a most interesting one. On the way I counted 50 Thomson's gazelle, 30 eland, 30 wildebeeste, 7 rhino, some ostriches and hundreds of kongoni.

Shortly after setting out from camp we heard a great noise and commotion among the men, who were following us. Riding back to learn the cause I found that a rhino had suddenly charged the *safari*, but had fortunately gone through the line of porters without impaling anybody; and beyond the breaking of a few loads as they were hastily thrown down by the terrified men, no damage was done.

Soon after this incident, as we marched along in

single file at the head of the *safari*, I noticed, a considerable way, to our left front, a herd of wildebeeste browsing quietly through the bushes, looking in the distance for all the world like the American bison. I had no desire to shoot one, as I had obtained my trophy years before, when they were much more numerous than they are now and could be counted by thousands on the Athi Plains. My friends, however, had up to that moment never even seen one, and they were naturally very keen to obtain a specimen. I proposed, therefore, that they should gallop on ahead, under cover, to a point which I indicated about a mile further on, while I made a circuit so as to get on the far side of the wily animals, and if possible drive them towards the guns. Accordingly, off I went on Aladdin, keeping in the thickest bush I could find well out of sight of the wildebeeste. While going along at a smart pace I almost rode on to a female rhinoceros and her calf. Aladdin was so terrified that he almost bounded from under me, and flew at his utmost speed from the equally startled animals. The old dam made a short charge, accompanied by the calf, but they very soon gave up the chase and returned to the shady depths of the thicket.

After this I went more cautiously, as the place was infested with rhino; but before I had gone a

quarter of a mile I suddenly came upon a savage old male, who was evidently in a very bad temper, as he charged most viciously the moment he caught sight of me. I immediately raced Aladdin for some bushes, thinking to elude him; but he was not to be thrown off. I heard him crash through the scrub after me, and looking over my shoulder, saw him with his head raised in the air and his tail cocked over his back, pursuing me with the utmost determination. The tangled undergrowth was all in his favour, as I could not let Aladdin go very fast. Fortunately there was a little glade ahead, and the moment I got into this I rode as hard as I could, while the rhino thundered after me, giving vent to loud snorts, which lent wings to Aladdin's nimble feet. I outpaced my pursuer here, but again got into a belt of bush which I had to cross to get into the open country. He still chased me most doggedly, and almost overtook me before I got clear of the scrub. Once in the open I felt safe, as Aladdin soon showed him a clean pair of heels, and the old rhino at last gave up the pursuit and returned sulkily to the cover of the bushes. Although I have been chased on horseback many times by rhino, this is the only time in all my experience that one of these brutes has made such a very determined and persistent attack. As a rule

they make a short charge, and if unsuccessful, dart away again.

As I was in this way forced to show myself, the wildebeeste soon spotted me. They stared for a few moments at the strange and extraordinary spectacle of a man flying along on a galloping horse; then, when they saw that I was rapidly gaining on them, they evidently made up their minds that I was bent on mischief, and, with one accord down went their heads and up went their tails and off they started in their peculiar gallop, cutting antics all the time, with manes and tails streaming in the wind.

I raced after them as hard as ever I could, urging Aladdin to his top speed, regardless of the numerous ant-bear holes which studded the ground hereabouts. The faster I went the faster the wildebeeste went also, and I soon found that they had no intention whatever of being driven the way I wanted them to go. As a matter of fact, they rapidly made off in quite a different direction, and made good their escape in spite of all my endeavours to head them off.

Now, my chase had taken me a considerable distance away from my companions, and when I looked round the caravan was nowhere to be seen, and I found myself in the midst of some stunted

thorn trees, which completely hid the intervening country from me. However, I knew the direction in which the *safari* was travelling, so I started off at an easy pace to meet it. I rode through an ideal bit of sporting country, consisting of rolling downs with numbers of trees dotted about, patches of bush, open glades, with here and there a nullah, and above all animals galore for the lover of wild life to feast his eyes upon. Indeed, I would not like to state the number of wild creatures of various kinds that I surprised in the course of that short ride. I remember giving chase to a couple of beautifully-coated jackals that started up out of the grass at Aladdin's feet and fled away in the direction in which I was going, thereby giving me an exhilarating hunt without hurting the jackals, as they eventually scuttled into safety in a thicket or down a hole.

In the course of an hour or so I was glad to come in sight of the *safari* again, as after all it feels somewhat lonely to be away entirely by one's self in the bush, in the midst of wild animals of all kinds. Riding up to some spreading trees I waited there for the *safari's* arrival, turning Aladdin's head towards the approaching crowd and watching them as they came into view through the bushes. Immediately behind me was a belt of forest and some high grass. No sooner had the caravan got

to within fifty yards of my position than the men began to set up a terrific noise and outcry, but owing to the hubbub raised I could not make out what it was all about. I thought to myself, "Another rhino, I suppose, charging the *safari*"; but presently I made out the cry of "*Simba! simba!*" ("Lion! lion!"). I at once called out, "Where? where?" when to my surprise they shouted back, "He has just got up from behind you."

Turning quickly in the saddle, I looked eagerly in all directions, but could see no sign of a lion anywhere. My companions by this time had come up and told me that they too had both watched it glide through the grass but a few yards behind where I stood. We all three immediately plunged into the thicket in hot pursuit. Our chase, however, proved fruitless, and not a trace of the lion could we find, although we hunted through and through the jungle, with our gun-bearers, syces, and porters all strung out in a line, so that the bush might be beaten thoroughly in all directions.

After some time we gave up the hunt and settled comfortably down out of the fierce heat of the sun under a spreading tree, where we had a much-needed lunch. While we were enjoying this frugal meal one of the porters came to tell us that he had gone to the place where he had first seen the lion jump up out of the grass, and had there discovered the half-

eaten body of a hartebeeste. When I heard this I called a council, and it was decided that the *safari* should go on to camp under one guide, while we with the other guide and our gun-bearers should go back and carefully stalk the carcase in case the lion had returned in the meantime to finish his meal.

I called up the two Wakamba guides and explained this plan to them, and told them to arrange between themselves the exact spot where camp was to be pitched, so that later on in the evening, after our hunting was over, we should have no difficulty in finding the right place.

We then rode back for some distance, and on approaching the spot where the lion had first been seen we all dismounted and very cautiously stalked the dead hartebeeste, hoping to find the lion back on his kill. In this we were disappointed, however, for unfortunately we drew a blank. We found the half-eaten carcase, but no lion.

I knew it was a perfect certainty that he would return during the night for another feed, and I was more than half inclined to make arrangements to sit up over the kill that night, more especially as I knew it would be almost full moon ; but as I found that one of my companions was not over-keen on this method of passing the time I gave up the notion, and we all decided to start for camp.

On our way across country we met with another herd of wildebeeste, which S. spent nearly an hour stalking, as he was still most eager to secure a trophy. From a little eminence I watched him make a skilful stalk, and on seeing him approach the wily herd, I felt as anxious for his success as I am sure he must have felt himself. As he crept along stealthily in the open from one bit of cover to another I thought that they would be sure to catch sight of him, for they were very much on the alert, and a head would go up from the herd every now and then and have a good look round; instantly S. would drop on the grass and remain absolutely still until the head went down again and all was safe for another advance. In this way he managed to wriggle up to within about eighty yards without being observed, but then, alas! he was seen, and off scampered the quaint-looking herd. One only, more daring or more curious than the rest, remained behind for a moment to investigate the cause of the disturbance, and, to reward him for his curiosity, he got a bullet somewhere in his body which had a most extraordinary effect on him, for he immediately started off at a furious gallop, kicking and bucking with all his might; after going about 200 yards in this fashion he began galloping round in circles, performing mad antics in the most fantastic manner, and finally circled himself out of sight



in the thick bush, where we lost all trace of him.

It was hopeless to pursue him any further, so we made our way back to our horses, and led by the guide, struck out for camp. By this time it was getting late, and after going some distance we began to fear that we had lost our way, as there was no sign of camp anywhere. We therefore consulted our guide as to where it was, and he cheerfully admitted that he did not know! He said it ought to have been where we now were, as by this time he had brought us to the banks of a small stream which he said was the Karusi. This was most annoying and disconcerting, for we had no desire to pass the night in the wilds without either food or shelter, after having been on the march since early morning.

I felt pretty confident, however, that if we kept on upstream we would be almost certain to come upon the camp sooner or later, so telling my friends to follow me as fast as they could, I pushed on at a sharp pace, and after a while was delighted to hear the joyful sound of an axe chopping up wood for the evening camp fire. Riding quickly back I hallooed lustily to my friends that camp was in sight, and it was not long before we were all seated under the friendly shelter of a canvas awning, sipping

hot tea, that most grateful and refreshing of drinks after a hot day on *safari*.

Next morning, out of curiosity to see if I was right about the lion returning to finish the kill, I sent a couple of reliable men to investigate. On their return they told me that every scrap of the meat had been eaten, and that there was no doubt that it was a lion that had been there, as his fresh tracks were plainly to be seen all round the place where the kill had been.

## CHAPTER VII

### THROUGH A GAME COUNTRY

WE stayed at the camp by the Karusi river for a couple of days, as the water was fairly good and not nearly so brackish as we had found it at the Kwamatuku. There was plenty of game, too, in the neighbourhood, and during one ramble I counted no less than three lions, 300 kongoni, 200 zebra, 50 impala, 30 wildebeeste, 5 rhino, 5 duiker, one solitary bull giraffe, and one specimen of that rather scarce and beautiful antelope, the bushbuck.

Next day I was out exploring with my friends, and in the course of the afternoon Mrs. S. stalked and hit a bull wildebeeste. He did not drop to the shot, so we followed him up for miles, but could not get near him, and as it was now beginning to grow dusk we had reluctantly to give up the chase and make our way back to camp as quickly as we could in the fast-growing darkness. In the excitement of the hunt we had not noticed that all our natives had been outpaced, and when we turned homewards

there was not one of our followers in sight. On our way we almost rode into a herd of zebra which were moving about in a rather uneasy way, as if suspecting the presence of some other foe than ourselves. This put me on the alert, and I looked keenly all round. In a few minutes I was rewarded by the



“THAT RATHER SCARCE AND BEAUTIFUL ANTELOPE, THE BUSHBUCK.”

momentary glimpse of what I took to be a lion's head, raised out of the grass not more than fifty yards away.

I dismounted, and, leading Aladdin, walked up to the place as cautiously as I could, and found myself on the edge of a kind of dry basin, about ten to

fifteen yards in diameter, with a raised rim all round. On the opposite side of this I could dimly make out in the darkness the forms of three animals which I now took to be large pigs, as we had been putting up several of these animals for the last half hour of our ride—in fact, I called out to Mrs. S. “Oh, they are only pigs!” The moment they heard my voice, they all three rose up, and I then saw to my astonishment that they were not pigs but lions!

It was impossible to follow their movements in the gloom, and as I feared they were coming for me, I mounted Aladdin in record time and was about to ride hastily off, when my companion, who was in a position to have a better view than I, called out “They’re going! they’re going!” Thus reassured, I dismounted, and taking my courage in both hands, aimed at what I imagined to be a standing lion. As the object did not move I made a closer inspection, and found that it was only a bush, behind which the lions had taken shelter in their line of retreat. It was out of the question to think of pursuing them, as we could not see ten yards ahead, so, much to our chagrin, we had to turn our backs on the lions and push on as rapidly as possible for camp.

On the way we felt distinctly “creepy,” riding along in the dark, and not knowing what wild beast might be lurking among the bushes ready to spring

on us as we passed. The circumstances recalled to my mind the true story of the extraordinary escape of one of the Game Warden's assistants in South Africa, who delivered himself out of the very jaws of a lion, by a good knife, a cool head, and plenty of pluck. This man was riding home at dusk through a game reserve, when a lion suddenly sprang at him out of the bushes, knocking him off his pony and so terrifying the latter that it galloped madly off, pursued by the fierce beast. The man was picking himself up when another lion pounced on him, gripping him through the shoulder. The Game Ranger was dazed for a few moments by the shock, but when he came to his senses he found himself being carried off by the lion, whose long tusks met through and through his right shoulder, rendering his right arm useless. As he was being dragged off in this fashion, with his heels trailing on the ground, he gave himself up for lost, but suddenly bethought himself of an old hunting knife he carried on his waist-belt at his right side. The knife was so loose in its sheath that it usually fell out on the least provocation, and even as the Ranger quietly doubled his left hand behind his back, he had a hopeless feeling that it would not be there. Imagine his joy when he felt the hilt in his desperate grip! In a moment the long keen blade was poised, and a blow at the lion's heart, thrice rapidly repeated,

made the brute wonder what had hurt him. He dropped his would-be victim, eyed him with astonishment for a second as he lay beneath him, and then staggered off into the bush. The moment he was out of sight, the Ranger struggled to his feet, climbed a tree, and before he fainted strapped himself on to a branch with his belt. No sooner had he done so than lion number one appeared on the scene again, having failed to catch the pony. He remained at the foot of the tree until the Ranger's dog came up, and by his barking attracted the attention of some passing natives, who drove off the lion and rescued the fainting man from the tree. A brief search disclosed the dead body of the lion that had attacked the Ranger, stabbed to death through the heart.

Although we were more than a thousand miles away from the scene of this adventure, yet we, too, were riding through a lion-infested country in the dark. It was a vast relief, therefore, when at last in the distance we heard Abbudi's voice calling out to guide us to the track leading to our tents and to safety. I was not quite happy, however, until I saw the cheery camp fires twinkling at us through the bushes.

I only had a very short rest that night, as at 3 a.m. I started off again accompanied by Abbudi and Mellauw to visit a *boma* which lay some twenty

miles away. The stars that morning were shining brilliantly, and it was delightful riding along by their light and that of the waning moon. The Southern Cross showed up particularly well and served to guide me on my journey until dawn.

Of course, for the first couple of hours, while it was still dark, I saw no game, although we could sometimes hear animals rustling in the undergrowth. When daylight came I saw that the country all round was sparsely covered with dwarf trees and bush, with here and there broad stretches of open grass country. Away to my left, and at a much lower level, lay an immense undulating plain which appeared to stretch away as far as the eye could see. Game seemed very numerous in this valley, for by the aid of my glasses I could make out giraffe, eland, rhino, and many kinds of antelope, while I saw one lion stalking along with the contented gait which showed that he had enjoyed a good meal but a short time before. Of mankind I saw no trace, save only one solitary bowman who was cautiously treading his way through the *nyika*.

I found this whole journey a most interesting one, for the country was quite new to me and I was constantly coming upon some feature of fresh interest. When I had covered about sixteen miles of the distance, I spied a very fine bull eland standing about a quarter of a mile ahead under the



shade of a spreading tree. My path, however, turned sharply off to the left here, so as I did not wish to do any shooting until after I had paid my



"ONE SOLITARY BOWMAN . . . CAUTIOUSLY THREADING  
HIS WAY THROUGH THE NYIKA."

visit to the distant camp, I left him undisturbed, though I promised myself a stalk if he should still be in the neighbourhood on my return.

I finally reached my destination at about 9 a.m., only to find that the man I had come out to see was away on a few days' shooting trip after lions. I rested for about half an hour at his camp, and heard from one of the men left on the place that lions in this part of the country were very numerous and troublesome. Only a short time previous to my visit one of these daring beasts had come one night close outside the donkey *boma* and by roaring vigorously succeeded in stampeding the donkeys. This was of course just what he wanted, for he thereupon promptly seized one of them and ate it close by.

I thought that Abbudi and Mellauw would be tired after their twenty-mile march, but they made quite light of it, and we all started off on the return journey in the best of spirits. When we approached the spot where I had seen the fine eland we made a careful search for him, but he was nowhere to be discovered, so we pressed on campward without further delay.

When we had covered about a dozen miles of the way I noticed in the distance eleven giraffe, all standing behind trees and intently watching us as we approached. As I did not want to shoot one of these gentle and harmless animals I took no notice of them and rode straight ahead. The giraffe stood

quite still for some time and allowed us to approach to within a couple of hundred yards of them before they turned and started off at a quaint gallop.

No sooner had they made off than to my delight my huge eland bounded out into the open from under a tree. He was evidently the same that we had seen in the morning, and it was certainly most accommodating of him to have walked so far in the direction of our camp. The moment I saw him I stood stock still, telling the Masai to do the same. After galloping a couple of dozen yards the eland pulled up, and looked all round to see what had so startled the giraffe. If he saw us he evidently took us for part of the landscape, as we remained quite motionless. At any rate he took no notice of us, and flicking his sides with his tail, he sauntered leisurely over to the nearest tree and took up his position there in the cool shade.

No sooner had he done this than I slipped quietly off Aladdin, handed him over to Abbudi, and started off with my '303 to do a stalk. Before setting out I gave very emphatic directions to both youths to remain absolutely still, as the slightest movement on their part would spoil everything.

A little way to my right the ground dipped into a hollow, which, if I could manage to gain it unobserved, would take me to a point within forty yards of the great bull. I therefore wriggled along

perfectly flat on the ground until I got to this hollow, but when once under cover I was able to push on much more rapidly and soon reached the point from which I hoped to be able to get a clear and close view of the eland. Strange to say, on peeping carefully from behind the cover of a friendly ant heap, I could nowhere make out the form of the beast, and was for a time extremely puzzled as to what had become of him. The fact was that I had forgotten to make due allowance for the distance which I had travelled, and was looking at quite the wrong spot—a thing which is very likely to happen unless careful calculation is made beforehand of the position of the quarry with regard to some commanding object. Indeed I did not discover my mistake or catch sight of the eland until it attracted my attention by suddenly whisking round and looking, not at me, but at the moving woolly head of Mellauw, who had disobeyed my instructions and had crawled up to a position on my left some distance off to see how I was getting on. For this disobedience I had a few words to say to him later on when the adventure was over.

There was, of course, no time to be lost now, so taking as steady an aim as I could at the startled eland, I fired straight at his heart. The instant he felt the lead, he gave a kick and a buck and was out of sight in a moment behind a small rise. I

gave chase as fast as possible, but on reaching the hillock behind which he had disappeared I could not see him anywhere, nor could I find any trace of blood. On my left, at a distance of about 150 yards from the spot where I had fired, there was a steep declivity down to the valley already mentioned, so I rushed to the edge of this and looked over, expecting to see the eland struggling down to the bottom. There was no sign of him, however, so I ran off to the right, thinking that he might have gone behind a fold of the ground in that direction. He was not to be found there either, and I was completely puzzled to know what had become of him. By this time the two Masai whom I had called to my assistance had come up, so I mounted Aladdin and galloped off to a rise at a little distance from which there was a good view all round ; but still the eland was nowhere to be seen.

I could not understand it at all, for I knew that he had been hard hit and could not have gone very far, so I returned to the Masai and told them that there was nothing to be done but to keep searching until we found him. We then went back to the place where I had shot him, and from there, after infinite pains, we managed to track him, step by step, to the edge of the precipice over which I had already looked. There was no doubt now that we

were on the right trail, as we found a drop or two of blood on the edge. The side of this precipice, as well as the whole valley beneath, was covered with a matted tangled mass of trees, shrubs, and creepers, and as I looked at this I despaired of ever



"I SAW THE HUGE BEAR STRETCHED OUT IN THE THICKET,  
DONE DEAD."

finding any trace of the wounded animal in such an expanse of undergrowth.

However, I intended to make a thorough search, so I tied Aladdin carefully to a tree, and off we all started down the steep face of the escarpment. Abbudi led the way, and while I was still lowering myself from the topmost rocks I heard a cry of

triumph, and he called out exultingly, "*Napata, Bwana, napata*" ("I have found him, master, I have found him"). Hurrying after him down the cliff I saw the huge beast stretched out in the thicket, stone dead. He had evidently fallen over the edge of the precipice to his present position



"I TOOK SEVERAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ELAND."

among the undergrowth, where it was quite impossible to see him from the spot on which I had stood at the top.

I immediately sent Abbudi at his best pace to camp to bring out twenty porters to carry back the head and meat, and also to fetch me a

the.

much-needed lunch, as I had had nothing to eat since 3 a.m. except a crust of bread from my wallet and some cold tea which I had brought in my water bottle.

While waiting for his return I took several photographs of the eland just as he had fallen, clearing



THE HORNS — RANKED SECOND TO THE BEST ON RECORD."

away the thick scrub for this purpose with much labour, and by the time the porters arrived the skinning and cutting up had been completed, and there was nothing left for them to do except to shoulder the meat, the hide, and the horns and march back with these in triumph to camp, which we reached safely just as night fell.



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On measuring the horns I found that they ranked second to the best on record shot in East Africa up to that date. My friends were very much interested in my day's adventures, and more especially rejoiced with me at the good luck I had had in obtaining such a fine head.

## CHAPTER VIII

### AN EVENTFUL XMAS DAY

I HAD now travelled as far to the eastward as I desired to go, so I proposed to my friends that we should swing round to the north-west and march through the great Kauti Plain as far as the Tapa River. This suggestion was readily agreed to, as it promised an interesting trip through a practically virgin country. I had many *shauris* (consultations) with my two Wakamba guides as to the nature of the country to be traversed and especially as to where water was to be found. They were both well versed in the geography of the district and gave me quite readily the local names of such mountains and hills as were in sight. Knowing that a native will say anything that comes into his head rather than confess his ignorance, I questioned both separately and apart from each other, and their answers gave me confidence in their fitness to lead us through the

*nyika*. They told me that we could not reach the Tana in one *safari* unless we started at 3 a.m. and marched until dark, and that the only water we could be sure of finding on the way was a small stream some ten miles from our present camp by the Karusi. Sometimes, indeed, a little brackish water was to be found at a place called Jukone, a hill a few miles short of the Tana, where there was a spring—but it might be dry, added one of the guides with characteristic caution.

I suspected that the Wakamba had either been bribed or intimidated by the *safari* into trying to induce me to make but a short march and camp by the stream which they had reported as only ten miles away, and that for this reason they were exaggerating the water difficulties at Jukone. I determined therefore to endeavour to reach the Tana in one march, and ordered the tents to be struck at 2.30 a.m. on Christmas morning, so that we might be ready to start half-an-hour later.

“A Merry Xmas” we called out to each other as we assembled round the dying embers of the camp fire to drink an early cup of tea before setting out. The stars twinkled brightly as we moved off in the darkness, the Plough and the Pole Star being exceptionally conspicuous on the northern horizon. My Wakamba seemed to be well aware of the fixity of the latter. I observed that they marched

straight towards it for a considerable time, so I asked them how they were able to find their way in the dark, and they immediately pointed to the North Star as their guide.

Save a stumble here and there into a hole, nothing of any moment occurred until after dawn. Then, as the light grew clearer, our interest was aroused by the sight of various kinds of game on each side of our path. A herd of wildebeeste trooped off to our right, while on the other hand, to our left, an inquisitive troop of zebra galloped towards us, evidently very much interested in finding out what kind of new animal we were. I always noticed that Aladdin had a very great attraction for them, and whenever I rode him I found that I could approach quite close to them, as their curiosity seemed to overcome their fears.

A little further on we passed a clump of acacia trees, many of them festooned with the graceful hanging nests of the weaver bird. The small sparrow-like occupants arose from them in clouds as we approached. I examined several of the nests, which each contained three eggs of a beautiful turquoise blue. I noticed that the entrance, curiously enough, was at the bottom of the nest, but the clever parents had made such a cunning little hollow just inside the doorway that there was small danger of the young birds falling out, until

such time as they were able to fend for themselves.

As we marched along through this beautiful country we came upon a small herd of eland, which



"FESTOONED WITH THE GRACEFUL HANGING NESTS OF THE WEAVER BIRD."

my companions attempted to stalk. They were not destined to be successful, however, as there were too many hartebeeste about, and they, in their usual annoying way, betrayed the presence of an enemy

to all the animals in the vicinity. I have often noticed that it is the custom of the hartebeeste to detach one of their number from the herd to act as sentry, and it is a common sight to see this sentinel perched on the top of an ant hill or other eminence which commands a clear view of the surrounding country. He seems to be relied on by all the game in the neighbourhood to give notice of the approach of an enemy, for as soon as he snorts and stamps and gets uneasy, everything within sight takes alarm and gallops off to safety.

After watching this fruitless stalk I separated from my friends and took a circuit to the left, as there was a little eminence in that direction from which I wanted to have a look round. It is extraordinary what a perfectly irresistible charm a hill has for one in an unexplored country. I always expect to find something strange or wonderful on the other side of it, and as it generally happens that there is still another rise beyond, I am invariably lured on so that I may have a peep into the unknown and find what is waiting there to be discovered.

Like Kipling's Explorer, I always seem to hear a voice whispering,

- “Something hidden—Go and find it  
Go and look behind the Ranges.
- Something lost behind the Ranges.  
Lost and waiting for you. Go!”

I cannot say that I have as yet made any startling discovery, but perhaps, this has yet to come!

On the present occasion there was of course another rise further on which called me to it, so without any hesitation I dipped down into the valley which intervened. The grass was very long here, and before I was aware I found myself almost on the horns of an old rhino and his wife, who were slumbering peacefully side by side. They were a most comical looking pair, and reminded me of a grotesque caricature I had once seen of a respectable old married couple with their nightcaps on. They were sleeping so soundly that my presence did not disturb them in the least, and I was so much interested in the weird-looking pair that I remained there for quite a long time watching them while the sun gradually grew stronger in the east. I could not help feeling that I was intruding on the privacy of the home life of these quaint creatures of the wilds, and I well remember the feeling which this vision of nature called up—among other things a tremendous sense of loneliness and isolation, and the utter insignificance of all those things which, in the busy hum of civilisation, seem to count for so much.

With these thoughts in my mind I rode carefully round the curious pair—not even disturbing their

slumber when my horse dipped into a sandy gully and scrambled up the opposite side not a hundred yards away.

When I had crossed the valley and reached the crest of the rise on the further side I was rewarded by a magnificent view over the surrounding country. Away to my left rose the frowning ridge of the Yatta escarpment. The distant roars of a lion came reverberating from the huge rocks which studded its precipitous face, while the lesser roars of a lioness, given in that peculiar manner which shows she has cubs with her, were plainly to be heard miles ahead in the direction in which the *safari* was travelling.

From my post of observation I could see for a great distance all over the country, yet curiously enough not a sign was visible of my own party, although they, with nearly a hundred followers, were not a mile away. The little valley along which they were travelling engulfed them as completely from me as if they had been at the other end of the world. I knew, however, that they were making for a huge castle-like rock which stood out distinctly on the plain some three miles off, where we had arranged to have breakfast, so putting Aladdin to a canter I made for this rendezvous. On the way I came across another rhino followed by her baby, but both speedily made off as soon as they observed me.



I reached the meeting place well ahead of my companions, and tying Aladdin securely to a tree, I at once began to explore the neighbourhood.

First of all I tried to scale the rocky height, but the growl of some unseen beast lurking in its dark lair soon checked my enthusiasm, as unfortunately I had no rifle with me. I had foolishly left it with my gun-bearer—a most unsound thing to do in the wilds, as the unexpected is always happening, and one never knows what predicament one may be placed in at any moment.

Just as I had made up my mind to restrain my impatience for the present, Abuddi spied me from afar off where he was striding along at the head of the *safari*, and stretching out his beautiful limbs in the peculiar run so typical of the Masai, was very soon beside me, bringing my rifle with him.

I then once more attempted the rock, which was some sixty or eighty feet high and rose up practically perpendicularly from the plain. I had not yet found a sufficiently easy path by which to reach the summit when the *safari* arrived, so I abandoned the attempt for the much more agreeable occupation of sitting down to a hearty breakfast which Paul the cook quickly prepared. We were all quite ready to do justice to it, and I think that a breakfast in a shady spot in the wilds after some hours'

riding in the keen morning air is perhaps the most enjoyable meal of the day.

While pots and pans were being packed away and preparations made for resuming the march, I once more attempted the ascent of the rock, while my companions elected to go on with the *safari*.

This time I was successful in my climb, and got a beautiful view of the country from the broad flat summit of the rock, which was, as far as I remember, some twenty yards or so in diameter at the top. I had not been long on the look-out when I saw a fine bull eland come trotting along in my direction, as if he had been disturbed somewhat by the noise of the *safari*.

Now I knew that Mrs. S. was desperately keen on shooting an eland, so as this one had by far the largest pair of horns I had ever seen, I was naturally anxious for her to bag it if possible. I could still see her in the distance, riding ahead with the *safari*, so I tried my best to attract her attention, but without result. The eland, however, saw me and stood stock still, gazing wonderingly up at my perch on the castellated rock, not fifty yards away.

Seeing that I could not in any way attract Mrs. S.'s attention, I called down to my gun-bearer to jump on Aladdin and gallop after her as fast as he could go. Now this man had never been on a

horse in his life, and the moment he mounted, Aladdin seemed to be quite aware of his inexperience, for he took the bit in his teeth and galloped after the *safari* at his top speed.

It was a most comical sight to watch the unfortunate gun-bearer hanging on to the saddle like grim death, without paying the very slightest attention to the reins, which dangled freely on the horse's neck! All went well until the tail end of the *safari* was reached, when Aladdin unluckily put his foot into a hole, and horse and rider turned a complete somersault.

From my rocky perch I witnessed the whole thing plainly, and fully expected that either the horse's leg or the man's neck had been broken.

My feelings were greatly relieved, however, when I saw both horse and man get up, apparently none the worse for the mishap. All this commotion had, of course, attracted the attention of the *safari*, and I saw Mrs. S. ride back to see what was the matter. When the gun-bearer had delivered my message she came galloping as fast as possible in my direction.

Meanwhile, however, the eland had taken to his heels, and by the time Mrs. S. got up to me, he was but a speck on the horizon. We reluctantly decided not to give chase, as he was going in the opposite direction to our line of march, so, wishing someone else better luck, we left him and fol-

lowed the *safari*. By the way, I heard afterwards that a sportsman did come out to this very part a few days later on, and meeting a huge, solitary eland shot it. It turned out to be one of the biggest heads ever bagged in East Africa, so I have no doubt that it was the one I saw.

We now turned off a little to the right of the direction in which the *safari* was going, hoping that we might be lucky enough to meet with lions on the way. At about 11 a.m. we unexpectedly reached the banks of the stream which the guides had told me about, and forded it without any difficulty. We did not, however, see much game about, at least nothing which we wished to shoot, so, soon after crossing the stream, we turned again to the left and headed for the *safari*. We noticed now that it had come to a halt, as some of the tents were being put up. I could not understand this, as I had given no orders that camp was to be pitched so early. As soon as we reached the men, I rode up to the Headman and asked him what the meaning of it was. He told me that he thought we should want to stay and hunt here, because, as the *safari* approached the river, a lion, three lionesses, and five cubs suddenly jumped out from the reeds close by! The lion and two of the lionesses trotted off across the plain, while the third, with the cubs, took refuge in the reeds beside the river.

S. was with the *safari* at the time this happened, and spotted the beasts when they were about 150 yards away. He was, however, unfortunately mounted on the very laziest and most obstinate mule that it has ever been man's misfortune to bestride, and although he made every effort, and tried every inducement to make the brute canter after the retreating lions, yet it was all of no use, so finally he had to dismount and try to overtake them on foot. Needless to say, the pursuit was a hopeless one, and he never got the chance of a shot.

' When I heard that the lioness with her cubs had taken shelter in the reeds, I collected all the available porters and had the covert beaten out. We hunted through the rushes untiringly for over an hour, but still there was no trace of them to be seen, and it was only when I got to the other end that I plainly saw her pug marks and those of her cubs in the soft mud, clearly showing that she had travelled rapidly up the bed of the stream and made off. It was evident from what the men told me that the lioness had remained in the reeds for some little time, for she was distinctly heard growling viciously at intervals. She must then have taken to her heels just in time to avoid the beaters, and under cover of the river bank escaped to the plains, where she no doubt rejoined her mate far away in the jungle.

I felt very much tempted to fall in with the

Headman's view that I should camp at this place and make an effort to bag these lions or give my friends a chance of doing so, but as my business was not to shoot, but to see the game and make notes of its variety and distribution, I felt that I must press on, and therefore gave orders for camp to be struck and the march resumed. There was much grumbling at this, and the guides were quoted as having said that water was very far off, and could not be reached until very late in the evening. However, I meant to go on, so they had to take down the tents. While this was being done, two old rhinos walked deliberately and solemnly up to within 80 yards of us, and calmly watched the whole proceedings; and although the porters yelled and howled at them for all they were worth, they would not budge an inch until they had satisfied their curiosity, when they went leisurely away.

We now got into quite a different kind of country. Up to this time we had been travelling through an open valley practically free from bush, with great undulating swells sweeping across the broad downs like waves on the sea; but now the character of the scenery entirely changed. We were shut in on all sides by dense bush and trees of various kinds, interspersed here and there with rocks and hills, which practically hid everything from view. We had a most exciting afternoon, for during our passage

through this belt of bush, we were charged no less than four times by rhinos!

The first time this happened we were all three riding abreast, the *safari* straggling behind and jabbering away among themselves. As we emerged from the thicket into a strip of glade, we saw to our left, on the far side of it and some seventy yards away, two rhino that had evidently heard our approach and were on the look-out for us. The moment we appeared they bore down as if they meant to trample us out of existence. There was but little chance of stopping them with a bullet, as it is never an easy matter to hit a charging rhino in a vital spot. Instant action was, however, necessary, so I called to the others to stand still and galloped the unwilling Aladdin on ahead towards the brutes. When I got to within some twenty-five yards of them, they suddenly swerved from the *safari* and made a furious charge at my horse. This was exactly what I wanted, so swinging Aladdin sharply round I rode swiftly across the front of the caravan, not thirty yards ahead of it—the snorting rhino in hot pursuit.

My companions meanwhile stood breathlessly watching the exciting chase, full of anxiety on my account, while I was only concerned that the beasts should continue their charge until we were well clear of the *safari*. I knew there was no danger so long as Aladdin kept his feet.

The moment we had left the *safari* behind I turned sharply off once more, while the rhino went thundering on straight ahead and were soon lost to sight in the bush.

Much the same thing happened a second time, and again a third time, and we began to feel quite at home in meeting these attacks and out-mancuvring the rhino. The *pagazis*, however, never felt reassured, as they are in mortal terror of a rhino—so much so that the moment they see one approaching they will drop their burdens anywhere and fly for safety to the nearest tree, which I readily admit is quite the best thing for them to do.

We were more inclined to be of the porter's opinion after the fourth and last charge, which very nearly had a disastrous ending. At about half past four in the afternoon I was riding a little ahead of my friends, and seeing a large leafy tree a short distance to the left of the track, I called out and suggested that we should have tea under it. My proposal was eagerly accepted, and we turned off to reach its cool shade. I had not gone a dozen yards, when, as I was passing through some thick bush, I was startled by hearing a violent snort come from the midst of it, and next instant I saw the vicious head of a huge rhino dashing at me at full speed. Aladdin needed neither whip nor spur to get out of the way—in fact he gave such a great bound that he almost unseated me.



and simply flew for about 30 to 40 yards before I could get the least control over him. Glancing over my shoulder to find out what was happening, I was horrified to see gun-bearers dashing wildly for the trees, mules careering off riderless through the bush, S. standing weaponless shouting for his rifle, and—horror of horrors!—the infuriated rhino rushing headlong on to Mrs. S., who was seated on the ground with nothing in her hand save an open umbrella.

I gave her up for lost, as I knew we could do nothing in time to save her. Luckily, at this critical moment she did not lose her nerve, but “shooed” the umbrella right in the face of the oncoming brute, and this extraordinary and unexpected apparition so startled the great beast that, instead of continuing his charge and tossing her aloft, he suddenly veered away to the left and disappeared through the bushes in a cloud of dust!

What might have been a very serious catastrophe had ended so comically that we all burst into a roar of laughter, which became even merrier when we looked round and observed that all our followers, with one exception, had taken refuge in the nearest trees. The one exception was Mrs. S.’s gun-bearer, who stood nobly by her all the time with his rifle at the “present”—but with no cartridge in it! He evidently thought there was virtue in the mere presence of an empty rifle! He was, however, only

Kikuyu *shenzi* (savage) taken from the *safari* to carry a rifle for a day or two.

After this adventure we all thoroughly enjoyed our tea, and I could not feel too thankful for the providential escape which Mrs. S. had undoubtedly had. I determined not to run such risks again in this close country, so I threw out a string of scouts to give us timely warning in case we should meet with any other unwelcome visitors. It was very well that I did take these precautions, for during the remainder of the march no fewer than eight other rhino were discovered close to our path. We had these driven off, not without difficulty at times, before the *safari* came up. The whole country in this particular locality seemed to be simply alive with rhino of a particularly vicious breed. Giraffes were also very numerous, while impala were in herds of hundreds, the bucks in one herd and the does in another.

Before reaching camp I had an exciting chase after a great boar, which at first sight I took to be a lion. It occurred in a little bit of open country, and I very much regretted that I had no spear with me, as I quickly overtook the boar and galloped close to him for a while, a proceeding which Aladdin very strongly objected to.

During the last few hours of the march the footsteps of the men lagged and many halts had to be called. Dusk was falling as we approached Lukosa

hill, and I sincerely hoped that we should find water at the foot of it, as I feared that the *safari* would be too exhausted to go on to the Tana, which was still some miles further on. It was with no little anxiety, therefore, that we followed the guides to the spring they had spoken of, which was called Muli-lone. As we reached it I saw that our tired men need not brace themselves for any further effort, as the green marshy track showed plainly that water was there. On tasting it we found it particularly brackish, but none the less thought ourselves very fortunate in not finding the spring dry.

We did not rest even yet, for just as camp was being pitched I saw a herd of about thirty eland grazing away on the right at about 300 yards' distance. We all set out at once and made a very careful and most interesting stalk, dodging from bush to tuft, and from tuft to bush, in our endeavours to get near a fine bull which we had noticed among the herd. He was too well guarded, however, by the females and youngsters to allow us to approach within satisfactory shooting distance, and as the light was by this time rapidly failing, we were compelled to give up the stalk and return to camp. We were not sorry to do this, as we had been on the move ever since about 3 a.m., and it can well be imagined how much we enjoyed our somewhat spartan Christmas dinner after such a long and eventful day.

## CHAPTER IX

### OUR CAMP BY THE THIKA RIVER

I DECIDED to remain at Jukone for a day or two as I wanted to see the game and country, and also wished to give the porters a rest after their long and trying march from the Karusi.

We were early astir on Boxing Day, and set off to explore the neighbourhood and have a look for the eland which we had unsuccessfully stalked the evening before. We rode over some beautiful country, through woods and across valleys, but saw very little game until finally by chance we came upon our eland again. He proved much too wary for us, however, and speedily took himself off and disappeared into the great expanse of the Kauti Plain.

A very great drawback to this particular region is the vast number of ticks which abound in the grass. These are atrocious little red brutes of about the size of a pin's head, which speedily work their way

through one's clothes and set up a most violent irritation on the skin.

On our way back a kongoni bull took a lively interest in our movements and was bagged by Mrs. S. for camp meat, of which we were in much need. We explored the whole neighbourhood in the vicinity of our camp, but found that it was but a poor place for game at this particular time of year, although I believe at certain seasons the plain swarms with animals. There were no natives living in these parts, but I was told by our guide that the Wakamba often visit it on a hunting raid. We were also informed by some men of the *safari* who had been in this district once before with a shooting party, that great herds of buffalo might be seen in the neighbourhood of the river Thika.

I made a shrewd guess that this was but a pretext to lure us in the direction of Nairobi, which the men longed to reach in order to spend the few rupees already earned; and from my experience of the unreliability of information supplied by natives I did not expect that we should come across a single buffalo, much less vast herds. At the same time, as it suited my purpose to march in this direction, we determined to pitch our next camp on the banks of the Thika.

Accordingly, we made an early start and passed through a very broken bush country, interspersed here and there with huge rocks and stony hillocks.

Eventually we arrived at the river, which we crossed at a ford, intending to camp on the other side. The whole *safari* got over by noon, so as the country looked very enticing we decided to press on southward until we should strike the river again higher up. We knew that we could do this in a couple of hours' march, as the course of the river forms a great elbow here. Inside the angle in which we now were the country was very beautiful, with delightful belts of shady trees alternating with open glades. We saw plenty of game, including impala, waterbuck, kongoni, giraffe, zebra, rhino, duiker, and dik-dik. We also came upon a newly-born waterbuck which had been deserted by its mother. The going was good inside the loop, so we did not take long to reach the river again, which we crossed for the second time before camping.

The moment the tents were put up, we set off in the cool of the evening to look for the much-talked-of herds of buffalo. Alas! however, not a vestige of them was to be seen. As we walked along the banks of the river an occasional flop into the water warned us of the presence of crocodiles, while the peculiar sounds which came from far down the stream told us that some hippo were disporting themselves in the deep pools of the river.

I sat alone by the camp fire that night ruefully reflecting on the fact that our pleasant trip was now almost over, and while I warmed myself by

the cheerful blaze, I listened to the medley of noises, made by the wild things, of the forest and river, which came plainly to my ears. The familiar sounds aroused in my mind memories of quite a host of incidents and adventures of other days; and it was with no little pleasure that I recalled the enjoyable time spent with some cheery companions a couple of years before, at a camp not a day's march from where I now sat.

We were a party of four on the occasion I speak of, and as we had had news of a great herd of buffalo on the opposite side of the river to that on which we were camped, we determined to cross over and go in pursuit. The Tana, even in the dry season, is by no means an easy river to cross, while in the rains it is entirely impassable for weeks at a time. Three of us therefore carefully followed the lead of an experienced guide and passed over in safety, but the fourth, thinking he knew a great deal more about the ford than the guide, haughtily ignored his advice and struck out a line for himself. What might have been expected happened. He missed the ford and his pony put his foot into a deep hole and over went both, headlong into the swiftly flowing stream. Our independent friend parted company, not only with his horse, but also with his hat, which he had to strike out for and rescue, and then swim to the bank, where his horse had meanwhile arrived. I am afraid we were all unkind enough to laugh

heartily at our dripping comrade, and chaff him unmercifully about his knowledge of African fords.

Eventually we separated and rode in pairs in quest of the buffalo. My companion and I had excellent sport, and, moreover, had the good fortune to come upon the herd, some two hundred strong. The buffalo continued to graze peacefully while we did a most painstaking stalk through bush and scrub, and along the rough bottom of a shallow donga, which eventually brought us quite close to a couple of magnificent bulls that had straggled a little way from the main body. We were only waiting for them to give a favourable turn so that they might expose a vital spot, when suddenly a waterbuck burst at full speed out of the donga in front of us, and, careering into the midst of the buffalo, startled them so much that the whole herd thundered off in a cloud of dust. We heartily blessed that waterbuck as we again painfully followed the spoor, and saw that there was very little chance of our ever again being able to get into such a favourable position.

Later on I spied a solitary bull buffalo, and thought I could run him down on my pony. My companion said it would be impossible to do this, so there was only one way to test our argument, and that was to try. Accordingly off I started on the trail of the buffalo, which had a lead of some 400 yards. Fortunately, it was clear open country without a bush or tree of any kind for at least a



mile and a half. The moment the buffalo spotted me it made off at full gallop in the direction of a belt of trees which grew along the Tana. This gave me somewhat of an advantage, and enabled to cut off a little bit of the arc of the circle on which he was travelling. Urging my pony to his top speed I galloped after him in hot pursuit.

How I escaped the holes and pitfalls that were all over the ground I cannot say, but luck was with me, and before the beast got up to the belt of trees I had him well in hand, so much so that, knowing that he was outpaced, he came to bay and waited for my oncoming. Seeing this, I stopped some 50 yards' distance short of him and had a good look through my glasses, when to my chagrin I found that it was not a bull buffalo at all, but a cow! Of course I had no intention of shooting a female, so I had to be satisfied with the knowledge that I had run her to a standstill. I must say that I was surprised at the pace the buffalo kept up, as I was well mounted, and expected to have had much less difficulty in overtaking her than proved to be the case.

After this incident my companion decided to return to camp with the gun-bearers, while I struck off alone for some hills which were about ten miles further on, as I wanted to see the country and anything new that might be found in it, either men or beasts.

In this way I went on and on, always enticed further away by the prospect of seeing something unknown and something new from the top of each hillock. All at once I discovered that it was growing late, and I was far away from camp and not very certain of the position of the ford. I therefore turned at once and rode back with all possible speed, making for what I thought was the crossing.

On reaching the river, however, I found myself in the midst of high reeds and rushes which covered not only my pony but myself as I rode along. Up and down the river bank I cantered, full of anxiety to find the ford before complete darkness set in, but I could find no trace of it anywhere. I had but a few cartridges left with me, and now and again I grudgingly fired one in the hope that my companions might hear it from the camp somewhere on the other side of the stream. It was a very awkward position to be placed in, especially as I was ravenously hungry, neither myself nor my pony having had any food since early morning. The place, too, was infested with lions, leopards, and rhino, while the river was alive with crocodiles, so much so that I dared not cross it at any point except the ford, which I found it quite impossible to locate. I could not tell whether I was five miles above it or five miles below it, as the trees and general aspect of the country looked much the same all along, and there

was no prominent landmark of any kind to serve as a guide.

I now fired the last cartridge that I could spare, which left me with but three for the night, and sat my pony eagerly listening and longing to hear an answering shot from my companions somewhere across the river. No such cheering sound broke the stillness of the gathering gloom, but instead I was startled to see the heads of two great rhino emerge from the bushes not forty yards away. They had evidently scented me, and now began to sniff the air and turn their heads from side to side in their efforts to locate me. I speedily got out of their way, and when I had put sufficient distance between us, I decided upon a tree in which I meant to pass the night, as by this time I had given up all hope of being able to find the ford over the river.

The sensation of being lost in such a wilderness is not at all pleasant, especially when one has had nothing to eat, and I must say that I felt pretty miserable. But when I remembered the exploits of some of the old African travellers and thought of the lonely and trying positions in which some of them had so often been placed, I was somewhat comforted and reassured, for after all I knew that my inconvenience was only a temporary one, and I remember quite well saying to myself, "You are only lost for a night ; it isn't as if you were

lost for ever, so there is nothing to make a fuss about."

HAVING thus resigned myself as cheerfully as possible to a cold and hungry night out in the *nyika*, I dismounted and led my pony in the direction of the river, wondering how on earth I was to get him a drink, of which he stood sadly in need. I feared that it would be impossible to get him down to the water, as the banks were very high and steep, but I hoped to be able to get enough in my felt hat to satisfy his needs for the night. While I was searching along the bank for a good place to climb down to the water, to my great delight I suddenly spied a native a little way off. I saw that he had not observed me, and I was afraid to shout to him lest he should be frightened and run away. I therefore approached him as closely as possible without speaking or making any sound, and then called out "*Yambo*" ("Greeting"). He looked somewhat startled and seemed inclined to run away, but I reassured him by signs that I meant him no harm, and when I got up to him I made him understand, although I could not speak a word of his language, that I wanted to find the ford and cross over to the other side. He was an intelligent fellow and readily understood what was wanted, so we set off, and within a very

short time he had guided me to the ford, which was not so far away after 'all. It was by this time growing very dark, but I safely negotiated the somewhat dangerous passage and soon afterwards rejoined my friends by a cheery camp fire. They were beginning to get anxious about me and were just about to send up some rockets as a guide, when I happily appeared amongst them. It can well be imagined how pleased I was to get back to camp so unexpectedly, and how much I enjoyed my dinner and comfortable bed that night.

I was still with these same companions, but in a different part of the country, when one day I had an unusual piece of good luck.

I had decided to see the camp all cleared out and follow on an hour or so after the others had marched off. I therefore let the whole *safari* get well out of sight, and having with me only my gun-bearer, I set off a little to the right of the path taken by the caravan. We had gone but a short distance when I spied a silver jackal, which I successfully bowled over. Soon afterwards I came across a Grant's gazelle with a very good head, which was also added to the bag. After this I observed something of a whitish colour standing under the shade of a tree, and, on starting, found that it was a zebra.

and

As I did not want to molest it I merely walked past, and soon found myself on the top of a rise overlooking a beautiful valley, interspersed here and there with clusters of trees. A little to my right, and some 400 yards away, I observed through my glasses a very fine Jackson's hartebeeste, which I



"A VERY FINE JACKSON'S HARTEBESTE."

made up my mind to secure. There were a number of ant-heaps dotted profusely over the valley, and I saw that I could keep under cover by stalking carefully from one to another. At last I got up to within 50 yards without being observed, and kneeling behind a convenient hillock I covered the

beast with my rifle. Just as I was about to fire, I suddenly heard a tremendous disturbance and the sound of galloping feet coming from among the trees on my right. After a moment, out from the bushes at a headlong pace burst a beautiful roan antelope, followed by a second in hot pursuit.



"OVER HE TUMBLED AFTER GOING SOME DOZEN PACE."

There evidently had been a fight between these two, and the larger and older animal was giving chase to the younger. On they both came at a tremendous speed in my direction, all unsuspecting of their deadly enemy lying behind the hillock. Number one flew past me at thirty yards, and as he did so I put a bullet into his shoulder, and over he tumbled after

going some dozen paces. Number two, in his rage, took not the slightest notice of the rifle shot but came galloping furiously past, with the result that a moment afterwards he, too, toppled over by the side of his late enemy, stone dead.

Of course I was naturally overjoyed with my luck, especially as it was such a rare chance, and the first occasion on which I had come across a roan antelope. Leaving my gun-bearer to do the skinning, I rode rapidly to camp for porters to carry in the trophies, and on the way bagged a fine ostrich and a warthog. When I arrived my companions had just finished lunch, and one of them asked me what luck I had had. Beginning with the smallest I told him that I had bagged a jackal, a grant, a warthog, an ostrich, and two roan antelopes. "Yes," he replied sarcastically, "and you have forgotten the three lions." Nor did he quite believe in my good fortune until the trophies arrived in camp a few hours later, when at last he was convinced, and remarked: "You are the luckiest man in Africa."

But all this is a digression, and I should not have remembered to put on record these experiences of a previous trip, but for the fact of our being camped in the neighbourhood of the Tana, which brought everything back vividly to my mind and induced me to jot them down roughly by the light



of a solitary candle, long after the rest of the camp had gone to sleep.

Soon after daylight next morning we struck our tents by the Thika river. Just before starting and as one of the mules was being saddled up, it suddenly developed acute colic, foamed at the mouth and nostrils, threw itself down in an agony and dashed frantically about. After a few minutes it expired in a final convulsion, blood coming freely from the nostrils and mouth. What happened to it I really do not know, but it is probable that it had eaten some poisonous plant during the night.

Abbudi told me that he believed the mule died from eating a certain kind of caterpillar which climbs up to the tips of the blades of grass, especially during the night and early morning when the dew is on it. Later on, when the sun comes out, the caterpillar quickly disappears down into the grass roots for shelter. For this reason, according to Abbudi, the Masai never allow their cattle to graze in the early morning. If by any chance one of their cows ate one of these caterpillars and showed symptoms of poisoning, Abbudi told me they would immediately bind a tight thong round the beast's neck, open a vein close to the spot where they had tied it, and allow the animal to bleed freely. He assured me that four minutes' bleeding in this manner effected a complete cure:

Whether there is any truth in this or not, I of course cannot say. The Masai have some very curious beliefs and customs, and many of them are so quaint that they are well-nigh unbelievable. I hope to devote a chapter to these interesting people a little later on, and to give some of Abbudi's own



"THE FALLS ON THE ATHI RIVER."

personal history which he entertained me with, bit by bit, as we journeyed together.

After leaving the Thika we marched straight across country in the direction of the falls on the Athi river, which we reached at about 11 a.m. On the way we saw a great variety of game, including waterbuck, kongoni, impala, giraffe, zebra, bushbuck,

and duiker. The *safari* also saw a lion which frightened them considerably—especially Paul, the cook, as it walked quite close to him for several yards. At the moment we happened to be some distance behind with all the rifles. As soon as we heard the shouting we hurried up, but by this time the lion had disappeared. We hunted for him



"DROPPING IT DEAD WITHIN A DOZEN YARDS OF HIM."

eagerly through the trees and bushes, but unfortunately had no luck, although he must have been hiding somewhere close by.

The camp by the Athi Falls was a most delightful one, as there is a charming stretch of river here and the falls themselves are most beautiful. The water takes a leap of some fifty feet sheer

down, and the tropical foliage, green, soft, and feathery, harmonises well with the white flecked foam of the falling water and adds additional beauty to the scene.

It would have been pleasant to have remained longer at this delightful spot, but we had to



"THE SAIARI DONKEYS COMPLAINED BITTERLY . . . AT THEIR  
UNUSUALLY HEAVY LOADS."

hasten back to Nairobi, so we struck camp next morning and once more reaching the Athi Plains, made for the farm where we had left the young kongoni on our outward journey. Here we were most hospitably entertained and put up for the night. We found our young hartebeeste thriving

wonderfully well. Indeed, so sturdy and strong had he become, that when Mrs. S. went out to see him he succeeded in breaking loose from her and bounded off into the wilderness with such speed that before we could take any steps to recover him he was quickly lost to view.

At daybreak next morning we said goodbye to



"A COUPLE OF MOST PLAYFUL LION CUBS."

our host, and set out for Nairobi, which we reached about noon without any further adventures. Unfortunately, I got a bad touch of sun on the last march, which brought on high fever a day or two after my arrival in Nairobi.

My two friends went further afield, and had some excellent sport and wonderful escapes from lions and other dangerous game. On one occasion S.

only saved himself from the mad onrush of a charging elephant by dropping it dead when within a dozen yards of him. A few days later Mrs. S. had a very exciting time, for a herd of these beasts took it into their heads to pay an afternoon call at the camp, and chose her tent as the rallying point. They were valiantly repelled, and some of them paid for their intrusion with their lives; but the *safari* donkeys were very much annoyed at this visit, and complained bitterly to each other next day at their unusually heavy loads.

Among the trophies bagged by Mrs. S. were a couple of the most playful lion cubs imaginable, which she brought home with her and presented to the New York Zoo.

## CHAPTER X

### PREPARATIONS FOR A SECOND EXPEDITION

At the time I arrived in East Africa the Northern Game Reserve was a large tract of country, about which but very little was known, and of which the boundaries, especially those to the north and east, were of the vaguest. While the southern and western sides were defined by recognisable physical features, such as the Guaso Nyiro on the south, and the Turkwell on the west, no natural boundaries could be given on the north or east for want of geographical knowledge of the country, and on these two sides the limits of the Reserve were merely arbitrarily marked out on an inaccurate map by straight lines drawn along the 3rd parallel of north latitude, and the 39th meridian of east longitude.

The whole Reserve was some thirty-eight thousand square miles in area, or, in other words, as large as

all Scotland and Wales put together. It contained within its borders part of that vast cleft in the earth's surface known as the Rift Valley; practically unexplored lakes such as Rudolf, Sugota, and Baringo; mysterious rivers such as the Turkwell and Guaso Nyiro; inhospitable tracts of barren waste like the Kaisoot Desert; and rugged ranges of volcanic mountains such as Lorogi, Matthews, and Marsabit, whose beautiful forest-clad slopes give a last shelter to the fast vanishing elephant. Throughout the greater part, however, it is nothing but *nyika*—a vast, parched wilderness of thorny scrub and stunted growth, practically waterless except during the rains, when for a few weeks its innumerable dongas and ravines fill to overflowing with a rushing torrent.

This great area had been declared a Reserve by a former Commissioner (as the Governor of East Africa was until recently styled), in order to prevent an undesirable number of sportsmen from penetrating into those regions where as yet we had no "effective control," and where, in consequence, trouble with such savage tribes as lived there might have been expected to occur—probably with ill results to the *shikari*.

The inhabitants of these regions are practically all nomads, and some of them are very keen hunters. It is, of course, a very difficult matter



to put a stop to the depredations of these people, who from time immemorial have had undisputed rights to the hunting and killing of the game in their districts. The question as to how they should be dealt with is a vexed one. I consider that it would be most unwise and unjust to prohibit the native from exercising his undoubted rights and privileges, which are part of his birthright, without compensating him in some suitable manner for his loss. If it is decided that no hunting of any kind is to be done in the Reserve by either native or European—and I think such a ruling would be a wise one—then the chiefs and headmen of the various tribes concerned should be summoned to a council and some agreement arrived at. They would probably gladly forgo their time-honoured rights for a yearly present of a few cows, sheep, and goats.

No attempt had ever been made to guard this large tract of country, and the result was that raiders came down from Abyssinia, and ivory hunters got in from the coast, and slaughtered the elephants with impunity. In any case this so-called Reserve was much too unwieldy to be properly watched, and a sanctuary that is not adequately guarded is worse, to my mind, than no sanctuary at all. It was important, therefore, that the area should be cut down to a workable size, and its limits defined by physical features, as soon as possible ; and I knew

before I left England that this was a duty I should have to undertake.

Soon after my return from the expedition to the Kitui district, I received explicit instructions to find, if possible, a well-defined eastern boundary to the Reserve, somewhere about the 38th degree east longitude, and I accordingly began to make preparations for a trip through this unknown wilderness. At the same time I intended to report on the number and variety of the game seen, make maps of my daily route, take notes of the various tribes met with, and jot down the general characteristics of the territory traversed. I could get but very little information about the country or the people, beyond the fact that the entire region was practically foodless and waterless. Some of the tribes were believed to be hostile, and it was rumoured that a raiding party of Somalis from the Ogaden borders were contemplating a foray on the Rendile and Samburu; if these fanatics were encountered I was told that but short shrift might be expected from them.

As I knew that I should be away for some three or four months, very careful preparations had to be made for this expedition through the *nyika*. I could not expect to obtain any food-stuffs on the way, as there was a famine at the time in the Kenya Province, through which the *safari* would have to march; in order therefore that we might

not be held up for want of *posho*, I had a supply of rice and beans sent on ahead to a place called Nyeri, which was about a week's journey from Nairobi on the line of route. To guard against the danger of dying of thirst in the wilderness, I arranged to take about fifty tins capable of holding five gallons of water each; these when filled



• "AND CONSTRUCT RUDE BRIDGES OVER STREAMS."

would enable us to travel for a day or two even if we did not come across a stream or water hole. Besides these tins I had a couple of water-tight canvas bags made which could be carried, slung over the men's shoulders, on a pole.

In addition to these arrangements for food and water, I had also to take rifles, ammunition, tents,

camp kit and cooking utensils ; hatchets and slashers to cut down trees, make roadways, and construct rude bridges over streams ; rope to assist in crossing rivers, and the thousand odd things necessary for the complete support of a body of men entirely cut off for some months from all civilisation and sources



"ROPE TO ASSIST IN CROSSING RIVERS."

of supply. Of course money would be useless among the tribes of the interior, so I had to take as currency bales of amerikani (cotton sheeting), coils of brass, copper and iron wire, beads of many colours and shapes to suit the fashions among the belles of the different nations, and many little

trumpery knick-knacks which I knew to be very precious to the savage heart.

When I came to enrol the *pāgazis* (porters) to carry all the loads of food and necessities, I found myself obliged to enlist a good many undesirables, as, owing to the number of sportsmen who had already outfitted at Nairobi, all the best men there had been engaged. Luckily, however, I was able to secure my old Headman, Munyakai bin Diwani, who proved himself invaluable throughout the journey. Of course I took with me Abbudi and my Arab horse Aladdin, as well as a dog, Lurcher, which had been given me by a friend a short time previously.

While I was in the midst of these preparations, and just as I was about to set out on my journey, a friend of mine, B., and his wife arrived in Nairobi. Before I left England I had been asked by B. and a friend of his if I would help them to get their *safari* together, so that they might not waste time on arrival. This I promised to do, but at the last moment the friend found that he was unable to leave home. The *safari* was all ready when B. and Mrs. B. arrived, and as they were most anxious that we should journey together, I applied for and obtained official permission for them to accompany me.

## CHAPTER XI

### ON SAFARI TO THE NORTH

WE left Nairobi on January 21st and set out on what proved to be an eventful and disastrous expedition.

Our route lay northward in the direction of Fort Hall, and as usual the first march proved full of difficulties. The men had to shake down into their places and get used to their loads; the mules and donkeys kicked and bucked and tossed their burdens off as fast as they were put on; some rascals who had received the usual advance of pay and *posho* tried to run away, and a strict guard had to be placed over them; so that it was not until late in the evening that we were all comfortably settled in camp at Kamiti Ranch, where the owner entertained us most hospitably.

Of course little or no game was seen so close to Nairobi, although a small herd of buffalo was reported within three miles of the ranch, which is situated on

the northern edge of the great Athi Plains, not far from the picturesquely wooded foot-hills of the Kikuyu Mountains.

During the night six rascally porters managed to elude the guard and escaped, taking their blankets and *posho* with them. This meant, of course, that their six loads had to be distributed amongst the remaining porters, who grumbled loudly, and swore dire vengeance on the deserters should they ever cross their path again.

Next morning we resumed our march to the junction of the rivers Chania and Thika. We camped on the tongue of land between the two rivers, which forms an ideal site for the home-stead of an enterprising rancher. Both streams are fringed with fine trees at this spot, while within sight are the beautiful Chania Falls, which plunge over a rocky precipice some fifty feet high.

Soon after daylight the following morning we set off again, and had not long resumed our march when we met a large caravan of Arabs, Somalis, and natives of the Boran country, with camels, mules, cattle, goats, and sheep. I noticed in the crowd a most beautiful and graceful girl, who had the appearance and wore the dress of an ancient Egyptian. She reminded me forcibly of a picture I had once seen of Cleopatra travelling in a similar way, with camels in the background. I only wish I

had thought of taking the girl's photograph. She had been bought in the Boran country by one of the Somali for four cows, and the owner expected to arrange a profitable marriage for her in the civilised South, for which the caravan was bound. She seemed quite happy and contented with her lot, and for the few minutes we saw her she showed quite a gay and mirthful disposition. What happened to her when she got to Nairobi, I know not.

We had scarcely gone more than two miles after passing this *safari* when we suddenly came upon the dead body of a M'Kikuyu, who had evidently been recently killed, lying by the roadside. There was no doubt that he must have met his death at the hands of one of the Somalis who had just passed, as the wound, which by the way was under the fifth rib, clearly showed that the broad blade of a Somali spear had entered there. On making inquiry from some other natives whom I met close by, I was told that the dead man had tried to steal the Somalis' goats as they were passing through some long grass. The owner caught the thief red-handed, and, as is the way of the wilds, promptly put his spear through him.

A little further on we saw a nice shady tree under which we thought of resting for a few minutes, but no sooner had we reached it than we made hasty tracks away again, as there, reposing in



the grass, lay the sun-dried and mummified corpse of another black man, all curled up as if he had died in great pain. I hoped in my own mind that these depressing sights would have no ill effect upon the



"A SMILING M'KIKUYU CHIEF."

nerves of my companions, and I trusted that they foreboded no evil to our own fortunes throughout the expedition.

When we arrived in the afternoon at our camp at Barra-Barra we were met by a smiling M'Kikuyu

chief, who did the honours of the locality and kindly brought us some much-needed firewood. During the latter part of the march, B. had been complaining of pain in his foot, and I now found that he was suffering considerably from inflammation.

Abbudi happened to be standing by while I was making an examination, and was equal to the occasion by suggesting a certain Masai cure, which consisted of a poultice of hot cow-dung. I decided to give it a trial, principally because I remembered reading in the memoirs of the late President Kruger how on one occasion, when he had amputated his thumb with his pocket knife, he removed the inflammation and saved his life by placing warm on the wound a somewhat similar poultice made from the contents of the stomach of a goat. Unfortunately, the remedy recommended by Abbudi did not in this case have much effect, but a hot fomentation which I applied proved more efficacious.

We were glad to leave this somewhat dreary camp early on the following morning and march to Fort Hall, which we reached without any incident, save that a porter ran away on the road. Fort Hall is so called after the official who built it in the early days of the Protectorate, when I had the pleasure of knowing him. He was a most lovable man, with a thorough knowledge of the Kikuyu

nation. These people knew him as Bwana Hora, and although he had often chastised them, they came to love him in the end as they have loved no other white man before or since. As is fitting, his bones lie here among the people to whom he gave the best of his life.

The Fort is now the headquarters of the official in charge of the Kenya Province. The telegraph had already reached it, and was being constructed further afield to Nyeri at the time of my journey. The building of a branch line of railway from Nairobi is now under consideration, and this work will probably be put in hand as soon as funds can be raised for the project. A railway is badly needed for the development of this part of the country, in which there are many hard-working settlers who are at present severely handicapped for want of cheap transport.

Within a march or two of Fort Hall, in the direction of the Tana river, is the excellent shooting district of Embu. Buffalo and rhino abound, while lions are also fairly numerous. Elephants come down from the forest occasionally and give the sportsman an exciting time in the high jungle of the Kenya foot-hills.

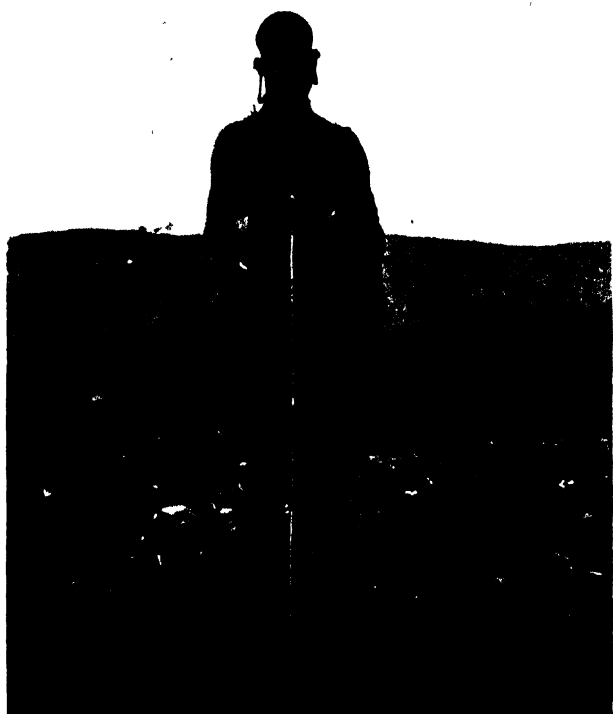
From Fort Hall straight north through this district and along the eastern slopes of Mount Kenya would have been the most direct way to.

continue my journey to get to that part of the Northern Reserve which I wished to reach. The local officials, however, considered this route too dangerous, as the various tribes were represented to be thirsting for the blood of any stranger whom they found travelling through their dominions. Indeed, it was said that no one with a force of less than 400 trained soldiers to guard him could with safety traverse it. Owing, therefore, to the policy which prohibited any person from marching through this "danger zone," I was compelled to turn off sharply to the left and make for Nyeri, a Government station a couple of marches to the west, in one of the districts of the Kenya Province.

Just after leaving Fort Hall we had to cross the Sagana river, over which there is a fairly good wooden bridge. We had two mules and six donkeys with us besides a horse and two ponies. The mules and donkeys showed a most extraordinary dislike to this wooden structure, and began kicking their loads off as soon as we endeavoured to get them to cross. We found that nothing would induce them to attempt it until all the loads were removed, and even then we had literally to drag them over by main force.

We camped at Wambugu's, a place so called after the local chief, who speedily paid us a visit. He was most friendly, and readily consented to pose

for a photograph. In honour of our arrival he collected a body of youths, in the full panoply of their Kikuyu ceremonial dress, to dance before us.



"WAMBUGU . . . . THE LOCAL CHIEF . . . . READILY  
CONSENTED TO POSE FOR A PHOTOGRAPH."

They looked very weird and quaint, as their bodies were all smeared over with white clay, which had been removed in rippling streaks by the finger of an artist. The dark brown skin accordingly showed

between waving bars of white clay, and produced a not unpleasing appearance.

The dance itself, and the droning tune by which it was accompanied, was rather monotonous, so after looking on for some time we began to grow tired of it. To end the performance, therefore, I let off a few rockets, which had the effect of dispersing



"IN THE FULL PANOPLY OF THEIR KIKUYU CEREMONIAL DRESS."

the assembly with magical celerity, accompanied by shrieks of delight from the women and children, who were dancing close by on their own account. Wambugu himself was so pleased with the bursting of the rockets in mid-air that he would not be content until he had let off some with his own hand.

On the next day we arrived at Nyeri after a comfortable march along a good road. I hoped to find here some fifty donkeys which I had ordered from Baringo to enable me to carry food supplies onward through the *nyika*. The moment we arrived, therefore, I inquired of the official in charge, but he had heard nothing of them, so I at once sent a Masai runner on to Rumuruti to get news of them, and impressed on him the necessity of doing the journey in record Masai time. I did not wish to set out for Rumuruti myself, and possibly miss the donkeys if they were coming through by a different road.

While awaiting the runner's return we made a few trips in the neighbourhood, which is reputed to be well stocked in bushbuck. We, however, saw none, but we did not explore the country towards Kenya very thoroughly. The whole district is very beautiful, the glades, valleys and streamlets in the forest towards the great snow-capped peak being particularly lovely. I was told by a man in my *safari* who had been up on the mountain that in the dense forest belt which encircles it there lives a race of pygmies. On my expressing disbelief, the man assured me that it was quite true, as he declared that he had seen them himself at close quarters. However, as I knew the man to be a great coward, I concluded that what he saw

was a troop of great baboons from which he fled in terror before making any investigation.

One morning at Nyeri news was brought to us that a lion had killed two women in the forest some three or four miles away, so we started off at once to try and bring the depredator to book. We had with us as guide a boy of about eight or nine, who said that he was present when the women were carried off and heard them scream when seized by the lion. This youth led us to the spot in the forest where the women had been sitting, but we could find neither lion nor trace of blood anywhere, although we searched very carefully for a couple of hours through the dense undergrowth. There was no doubt, however, that the women had disappeared, so what became of them remained a mystery. I was rather inclined to doubt the lion theory from the beginning, as my experience told me that he would only kill and devour one at a time. It seemed to me much more likely that some enterprising men of a tribe in the locality were short of wives, and so had made a raid and carried them off.

On returning to camp I was glad to find that my Masai runner had returned, but unfortunately he brought back word that there was nothing whatever known of the donkeys at Rumuruti. I decided therefore to set out next morning for that place and discover for myself what had become of them.



## CHAPTER XII

### AN ADVENTURE WITH LIONS IN A SHOMA

WE were not sorry to leave Nyeri, as although the climate of the place is on the whole good, yet on account of its height, some 8,000 feet above sea level, it is frequently covered with cloud or mist, and the nights are intensely cold.

Soon after setting out we began to see game in small quantities, especially hartebeeste and eland. They all seemed very shy, owing, no doubt, to the number of times they had been shot at by *safaris* passing this way. After a pleasant and interesting march we reached the Buni (Ostrich) river soon after mid-day, where we camped. The grass all round was long and very dry, so I gave orders that on no account were fires to be lighted until it had been cut down from about the tents. A few moments afterwards, what I had wished to guard against happened, for while the other men were busily engaged in cutting down the grass, the cook.

disobeyed my order, with the result that the whole place flamed up in a second, and but for the prompt and desperate efforts of the whole *safari*, who beat the flames out with branches, our entire outfit would have been burnt up. As it turned out, I was delighted to find that it was the cook himself



"WE WERE NOT SORRY TO LEAVE NYERI."

who was the only one to suffer, all his blankets and kit being lost in the fire. When he came later on to inform me of his misfortune, I told him that it was a well-merited punishment for his disobedience.

In the afternoon we went out to have a look at the country, and had a most exciting chase after a serval cat, which my dog Lurcher made desperate



"THE BEAUTIFUL WATERS OF LAKE EL BOLSON."

efforts to overtake. I fancy he would have had a very warm reception if he had succeeded, as a full-grown serval is by no means a despicable foe. The cat, however, was too quick for him, and got into the bush among the trees, where it was quite hopeless to try and find it.

During this chase, while galloping across a bit of grassy plain, B. inadvertently dropped his field glasses and did not discover his loss for some time. As this was a serious matter in the wilds, we determined to have a good search for them next day. Accordingly, in the morning we took practically the whole *safari* with us, and divided the country over which we had travelled the previous day between the men, spreading them in a line over it. They were all very keen on the search, as a reward of five rupees was promised to the man who should find the glasses. The prize fell to a Masai who had attached himself to us at Nyeri and who, with Abbudi, was in the van. This man was so delighted with the five rupees and considered himself so rich thereby that he promptly left us and returned to his *manyatta* (village), where no doubt there were great rejoicings over his good fortune.

We saw some hartebeeste, duiker, ostriches, and a jackal on our day's march, and that night we camped on the banks of the Guaso Nyiro, which is here but a small stream having its source in the forest-clad

Aberdare mountains, which stretch away to the southward at no great distance. In that direction also towers the giant mountain Kinogop, near which lie the beautiful waters of Lake El Bolosat. The nights were still bitterly cold and we all suffered more or less from the chill wind that swept down the valley from icy Kenya, which stood out boldly no great distance off to the north-east.

From the Guaso Nyiro we marched to a stream which the Masai call Angara Ngabit, and on the way we saw a troop of baboons, huge red and brown brutes that looked in the distance just like old negroes. Lurcher made for them at sight, but they were not in the least afraid, and when they got him into their native bush, chased him for his life back to us.

The following march took us to the stream called Angara Suguroi, and here we had an exciting experience. As soon as camp was reached, we noticed a crowd of vultures circling in the air, about half a mile down stream. I therefore sent Abbudi to find out what had been killed. He soon returned with the information that two or three lions had been there, and had killed and partly eaten an eland. This was exceedingly good news to receive, as I knew that the lions would be certain to return after dark to resume their feast. We therefore determined to build a *shoma*, which is the

Somali name for a structure made beside a kill, from which a sportsman may, with some degree of safety, shoot a lion when he returns after dark to have another meal.

We accordingly all set out for the spot, taking with us the Headman, Munyakai bin Diwani, a Somali gun-bearer, and a couple of dozen porters carrying axes and slashers to cut branches and drive in stakes. When we arrived at the spot where the half-eaten eland lay, we found ample evidence of a mighty death struggle, as the ground was torn up all round, while shrubs and branches lay broken in every direction.

We at once proceeded to build the *shoma* within four yards of the dead eland. It was constructed in the following manner. First, stakes were cut and driven firmly into the ground in a circle having a diameter of about eight feet. As a matter of fact, we had no time to complete the enclosure, for when little more than half of these uprights were in position dusk came on, and the remainder of the *shoma* was merely closed by bushes hastily cut and placed round to fill in the gap. The upright stakes were interlaced with thin wattles which bound them firmly together and made them more or less rigid, while all over the outward face we fixed small branches and leaves, which we plucked from the surrounding trees and bushes, so as to make the

whole structure look as natural as possible. Near the base of the *shoma*, and looking out on the body of the eland, loopholes were cut, through which we could see and thrust our rifles. Of course a small opening was left at the back of the *shoma* for a doorway which would be closed again by a bush as soon as we got inside.

In addition, I had a steel trap set close to the kill, which I thought would be powerful enough to hold the lion for a second or two if he put his foot into it, thus giving us a better chance of shooting him before he could get out of sight in the dark. I had this trap firmly anchored to a big root by means of a stout rope.

When we returned to camp we swallowed a hasty dinner, and then all three set out for the *shoma*, accompanied by two gun-bearers whom I considered necessary to have inside with us so that they might guard the back of the flimsy *shoma*, where we were only protected by a few bushes.

The ground inside had been covered with dry grass, and on this we placed our blankets beside the loopholes, and taking up as comfortable a position as possible, thrust the barrels of our rifles through the holes and remained thus for hours, intently watching the spot where we knew the half-eaten body of the dead eland lay. The night was so inky black that we could barely see even the

muzzles of our rifles. It was consequently quite impossible to make out the eland, which was only four yards from the loopholes.

In this way we sat with all our senses on the alert until about midnight, when I heard a rustling among the bushes ; I whispered to my companions on no account to move or make a noise of any kind, as the lions were approaching. Intense silence again reigned for the space of about half an hour, when, without warning of any kind, I heard the deadly, cautious advance of a lion absolutely at my elbow, just outside the fence on my side of the *shoma*. He was so close that when he stealthily put down his paw, after holding it poised in the air for what seemed to me like an eternity, he actually stepped on to the dry leaves which had fallen from the branches of the *shoma*, and these now rustled as he placed his foot on them, not a yard from where I sat.

The creepy feeling which this slow and stealthy advance at such close quarters produced is indescribable. I feared every moment that he would jump through our fragile structure, as, of course, he knew quite well that we were there and was investigating our position, possibly with the view of getting at us. Every moment I hoped to see his body pass before my narrow loophole, and as a matter of fact he was so close that I was afraid



he would brush against the muzzle of my rifle. I therefore drew it back with the greatest stealth until it was flush with the opening.

Unfortunately, just at this moment one of the men, who did not realise the importance of silence, moved noisily, with the result that the brute gave a low growl and bounded away. It was a great disappointment, as in another moment the lion would, I am convinced, have shown his head and so have given me the chance I was waiting for. However, there was no help for it, so I recommended that absolute silence should now be maintained, as I felt that he would return before long and endeavour to devour the remains of the eland—nor was I mistaken.

Within an hour we heard him begin his advance once more, and this time he was accompanied by at least a couple of his mates, as we distinctly located three lions round about us. We could plainly hear the rustling of their bodies through the low bushes which grew thickly hereabouts; then there would be a halt for a second or two, a low growl and again a stealthy advance. As they neared the kill they gave vent to a few purrs and fierce low snarls, evidently with the object of instilling terror into anything in the vicinity. On our part I must say that we found the sinister music with which they heralded their approach distinctly awe-inspiring.

Finally the eland was reached and then began a mighty rending of meat and scrunching of bones, followed by vicious purrs and deep savage growls which were enough to make the stoutest heart quail.

We had agreed that no one should fire until the lions had settled well down to their meal, so that we might have a better opportunity of making out their position and getting in a deadly shot. The brutes could not remove the kill, because I had taken the precaution of roping the body firmly to some stout trees against which it practically rested.

All at once one of the lions put his foot into the trap, and the moment the steel jaws closed on him there was a loud and startled growl which told me that we must act instantly. My companions all this time were eagerly and impatiently awaiting my signal, so when I called out "Fire" we all three blazed away into the darkness, aiming as well as we could for the lions. At once there was a tremendous chorus of growls and fierce grunts, accompanied by the furious lashing and plunging of the lion that was caught in the trap, which was only strong enough to hold him for a moment or two. The commotion was so terrific that I greatly feared the enraged animal was making for our *shoma*, where in the darkness he would make but short work of us. To add to the general noise and confusion, both our

gun-bearers discharged their rifles, crying out that the lions were about to burst into our enclosure through the flimsy bushes they were guarding at the rear. Altogether, what with growling lions, shouting natives, and belching rifles, the din for a minute or so was appalling.

Then followed the deep silence of the night. I listened intently for the sound which would tell us that we had not failed to hit one or other of the beasts, and at last it came, the long, low growl which a lion always gives when he is wounded and gets to a bit of covert. "He's hit! He's badly hit!" I cried to my companions. "We will get him in the morning."

A few more growls followed, and then once more everything became silent. There was nothing to be done now but to wait eagerly for the dawn, and with the exception of the melancholy cry of a hyæna somewhere near us, nothing further disturbed the remainder of the night. Before it was quite daylight I made a fire just outside the enclosure, as it was very chilly, and here we warmed ourselves and waited to see what luck had in store for us.

As soon as there was light enough we went to investigate, and found that two bullets (my own and Mrs. B.'s) had gone clean through the dead eland, while B.'s could nowhere be discovered. We

hoped therefore that it had found its billet in the body of the lion, especially as B.'s loophole was a little nearer to the eland than the other two. Accordingly we set out and hunted for a trail of blood, but though we searched eagerly in every direction, we could not find any trace of the wounded animal. We continued the hunt for many hours, but eventually had to give it up. I have no doubt that the wounded lion must have got into a great bed of reeds, some miles in extent, which grew in a swamp not far off.

Although we were naturally much disappointed in not being able to find him, yet I shall always remember that night as one of the most thrilling and exciting and withal enjoyable that I have ever spent in the wilds.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THROUGH LAIKIPIA

As soon as we returned to camp after our night's adventure, we did full justice to a much-needed breakfast, and an hour later resumed our march to Rumuruti. On the way, B. secured an oryx—a stroke of luck, as these beautiful animals are rather rare in this part of the district—while a Grant's and a Thomson's gazelle fell to Mrs. B.'s rifle. This was the first bit of successful shooting done since Nairobi had been left, so both were much pleased with their good fortune. We saw numbers of the smaller antelope on this march, but there was hardly a buck with a good pair of horns left, so busy had the sportsmen been along the route.

Before reaching camp we came across a Masai *manyatta*, and as I badly wanted some mutton broth for an invalid, I took five rupees (equal to 6s. 8d.) from my cash box, and, calling Abbudi, gave him instructions to go to the Headman of the Masai

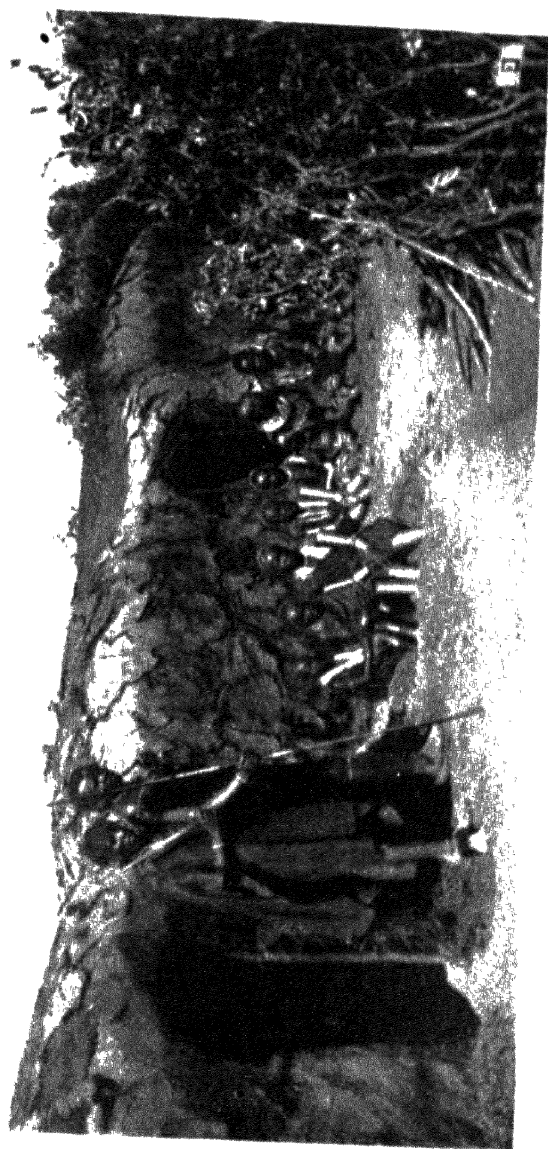


FIG. 1. CAVE ENTRANCE.

with the money and bring back a fat sheep in exchange. The amount was ample for a sheep in these parts, but the old rascal would not part with



"THE MASAI CHIEF MASEKONDI."

one, although there were thousands round us. Of course he had a right to refuse if he wished, but still I thought it a very bad spirit to show towards the white man.

Next day as we approached Rumuruti we were met by a fine-looking native who turned out to be the Masai chief Masekondi. The European official in charge of the Masai on Laikipia issues his instructions principally through this chief, and holds him more or less responsible for the good conduct of the tribe. When I explained to Masekondi how we had been treated the previous day by one of his Headmen, he was so angry with his inhospitable and discourteous conduct that he at once sent back a party of warriors to collect a fine of five sheep, which he inflicted on the old curmudgeon as a punishment for his churlishness.

Meanwhile we pushed on and arrived at Rumuruti, which is a small Government station, situated at the southernmost end of what is known as the Pest<sup>1</sup> Swamp. This is an expansion of the Guaso Narok or Black River, and extends for about fourteen miles along its course, with a width in some places of a mile or more.

I was much disappointed to find that no donkeys had yet arrived for me from Baringo, so I at once despatched Munyakai bin Diwani to that place to purchase and bring me fifty with as little delay as possible.

Some time before I left Nairobi I had requested the District Commissioner of Laikipia to procure

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced *puac*.



me a couple of reliable guides for my journey, and this he had been good enough to arrange, so I found awaiting me two men of the Samburu nation who knew the whole country northward to Marsabit, a place in the Reserve which I wished to reach. This was the first time that I had ever seen any of this tribe, and I must say that I was not favourably impressed with the appearance of the two representatives provided as my guides.

When I got to know the Samburu people more intimately, however, I found that they were on the whole considerably better than I had expected, while the two guides who had at first sight impressed me unfavourably, proved themselves very reliable and trustworthy fellows, who served me most loyally throughout my journey.

While I was waiting for the return of my Headman from Baringo I made various excursions in the neighbourhood of Rumuruti to see what game was to be found in these parts, while my companions did some shooting on their own account. I saw numerous herds of zebra, impala, Thomson's and Grant's gazelle within a radius of ten miles from the Boma, as the natives call Rumuruti. I also noticed near this place a few rhino, some oryx and duiker. Along the marshy edges of the Pes Swamp hippo may be found at all times, while elephants and buffalo sometimes visit it. A few days before we

arrived no less than five elephants were shot by a party of sportsmen within a mile of the Boma. Once in the grey dawn I watched a fine old lion take refuge among the cool recesses of the papyrus grass which covers its entire surface. Another time as I was riding back to camp in the dusk I suddenly came upon a lioness. I took a quick shot at her but missed, and she immediately disappeared in the gloom.

Leopards are very numerous in the neighbourhood, and I counted no less than seven of these beasts of prey in one afternoon. They are at times very dangerous, and the officer in charge at Rumuruti told me that they sometimes carry off native children. A leopard is at all times a nasty brute to tackle, as when wounded it is not content with springing on and wounding one person but will dash with lightning-like rapidity from one to another, biting and tearing, until it has put its teeth and claws into everybody within reach.

A curious incident which happened at Nairobi not long ago will show how very audacious these brutes can sometimes be. The official in whose house it happened, himself gave me all the details when I went to visit him soon after my arrival in East Africa. It seems that his daughter was one morning sitting playing the piano in the drawing-room. He happened to go into the room at

e time, and on strolling over to the open window was surprised to see the wet, muddy foot-arks of some large animal plainly visible on the floor. On hearing his exclamation of surprise, his daughter jumped up from the piano, and seeing the door, followed it across the drawing-room and through a doorway into the bedroom beyond. Just as she got inside the door she was much astonished and startled to see, projecting from under the bed, a leopard's tail! Hastily retreating, she called out to her father that there was a leopard under the bed. This sounded so incredible that for the moment he thought she must be mistaken, especially as on going into the room he saw no sign of the tail. To make sure, however, he put his head down to look and was met by a fierce growl from the open jaws of the leopard. Needless to say he lost no time in putting the door between himself and the angry beast. Borrowing a rifle from a friend, as he did not happen to have one of his own at hand, he now went round to the bedroom window to shoot it. The instant he showed himself the leopard dashed frantically at him, but fortunately the window had iron bars across it, so the savage brute was unable to break through, and was soon despatched without having injured anyone. There were various theories at the time to account for the leopard's boldness. Some said he was charmed into

the house by the music, while others held, more prosaically, that he was after food of some sort.

The country round Rumuruti is an ideal one for the sportsman, consisting of rolling plain covered with grass, interspersed with bush and forest glades. My companions got some good shooting, and Mrs. B. brought down, among other trophies, a fairly good wart-hog and a very good Grant's gazelle. The game is getting rather shy and scarce in the district, which is partly owing to the number of shooting *safaris* that pass through, but is mainly due to the vast flocks and herds of the Masai, which eat up the pasturage.

When we had waited some days at Rumuruti, we moved on a few miles to a small stream called the Iam, which flows into the Pes Swamp about five miles to the north of the Boma. Before marching, we left word for the Headman to follow on as soon as possible, and also gave Masekondi's wives a small present, as they had very kindly supplied us with fresh milk daily while we were at Rumuruti. The river-bed at our new camp was dry in places, and flowed underneath the surface, as is often the case with East African rivers. What little water remained above ground in some pools proved to be salty, but on this account was in great favour with the Masai, whose cattle thrive on its brackish waters. From the

I am the *safari* marched on to the north end of the Pes Swamp, while I rode back to Rumuruti to make inquiries about the donkeys and leave word with the official there of our change of camp. After a pleasant lunch with the District Commissioner I returned in the evening to find my



MASERONDI'S WIVES AND CHILDREN.

companions all comfortably settled in the new camping ground, where we decided to await the return of Munyakai.

There were numbers of Masai with their flocks and herds in this locality, and on visiting a large *manyatta*, or village, of these people, I was most hospitably entertained. We in turn were visited at

our camp by a particularly fine specimen of this tribe, whom with great difficulty I persuaded to pose for his photograph—indeed he would not submit to the dreaded ordeal until Abbudi and



“HIS GREAT STATURE IS APPARENT.”

another Masai volunteered to be taken as well so as to reassure him. His great stature is apparent from the accompanying picture.

I could get no information as to what the country was like between the Pes Swamp and the

Guaso Nyiro, which flowed to the east of us, so taking my rifle and some ammunition, I went off by myself to explore in this direction. Abbudi was rather hurt that I would not take him, and protested that it was not safe for the *Bwana* to go alone. I rode some fifteen miles from camp, and on the way, as if to emphasize Abbudi's warning, I fell in with a vicious old rhino that was standing under the shade of a tree. As I came upon it all unawares it took me entirely by surprise, and had Aladdin not been on the alert and speedy enough to get out of the way of his charge, it would probably have fared badly with us. As it was, I escaped with a torn coat and a few body scratches which I received while plunging wildly through the jungle in my efforts to throw off our pursuer. My only fear was that I might run into another while the mad race lasted. Fortunately, however, this did not happen, though later on I saw two or three more rhino which were avoided by making a circuit at a respectful distance. The bush was alive with hundreds of zebra and Grant's and Thomson's gazelle, with here and there a pig busily grubbing for a succulent root. My ride took me well out of the beaten track, so the animals were not shy or frightened of me, and it was a great pleasure to ride amongst them and observe their ways at close quarters.

The country was fairly flat, covered over with stunted acacias and here and there a thorn bush. There was a plentiful supply of coarse grass, which had a very dried-up appearance, as there had been no rain for some considerable time. There were comparatively few dongas, or ravines, and the ground was much less broken than is generally the case in this part of East Africa, so the going was pretty good throughout. When I got to the banks of a dry river bed well on in the day and found that there was still no sign of the Guaso Nyiro, I decided that it was quite time to return, so, making a great detour in order to explore a fresh piece of country, I rode back towards camp.

On the way I met five Masai, who told me that as they were walking along in single file, about a mile from where they met me, a lion suddenly jumped out of a bush they were passing and growled fiercely at them. At the same instant no less than three lionesses sprang up from the long grass practically at their feet. Fearing that the brutes would be on them, the Masai poised their spears for a thrust, but the lions had just enjoyed a good meal—as the remains of a zebra close by showed—so they were not in the mood for a fight, and with one or two more growls at the intruders, they walked slowly off.

I asked the leader if he could guide me to the spot where this had happened, and he agreed to do so if



I would give him "baksheesh," a word of which the Masai have quickly learned the meaning, as they are great beggars. I readily promised this if he would show me the lions, so off we all started, and in a very short time they pointed out the bush from which the lion had bounded and the three "forms" of the lionesses in the grass. I scanned the surrounding country with my glasses in all directions, but there was no sign of a lion anywhere. We hunted the neighbourhood thoroughly, and I galloped here, there and everywhere, but had no luck, so I returned to camp, feeling very much disappointed.

Soon after I got back, however, I was delighted to see my Headman Munyakai approaching camp from Baringo, bringing 50 donkeys with him. He had had considerable difficulty in getting them, but eventually, like the excellent fellow he was, succeeded with the help of the official in charge at Baringo in procuring the required number. As each of these donkeys would be able to carry two loads of 60 lbs., I was now freed from all anxiety as to how I should carry sufficient food with me for my men luring the journey through the barren *nyika*.

## CHAPTER XIV

### ALONG THE GUASO NAROK

I WAS now ready to set out, without any further delay, on the more difficult and arduous portion of my journey to the north, my friends intending to accompany me for part of the way only, and then return to Nairobi at their leisure.

Accordingly, it was with no little satisfaction that on the following day we left the camp by the Pes Swamp. We found, however, that the donkeys were quite wild and had a decided objection to carrying anything, so that the pandemonium which ensued when the men tried to catch them and pack sacks of food on their backs was simply indescribable. Men and loads were flung all over the place, and it was not until each individual beast had become thoroughly tired out and exhausted that anything could be done with it. Even then they gave a great deal of trouble and worry, and the donkey-boys, for this day at any rate, were very sorry for themselves,

and in the evening came to me and requested the privilege of carrying a sixty-pound load on their heads rather than again drive half-a-hundred devils.

I may mention here that in the course of a few days these donkeys became quite tame, and bore their burdens patiently and well. All the same, they were a very great nuisance at times, as whenever a river or steep donga was met with, all the loads had to be taken off their backs and carried across, and then repacked again on the far side. We also found it very necessary to guard them closely at night to prevent lions from getting at them, as the love of these brutes for donkey flesh is notorious, and they will run any risk to obtain their favourite food. Throughout our journey the guard was fairly successful in keeping them off, and although lions often tried to get into our *bomas*, yet they only succeeded in one solitary instance, when, on a dark and stormy night, they managed to seize a victim, and get clear away with it.

On the whole, I cannot recommend donkeys to the sportsman, as they are slow, troublesome, and often a very great nuisance. They need much care, and if one travels through a tsetse fly country are liable to get bitten and die. Their chief advantage is that they are economical, for they carry twice as much as a man and do not require any

feeding beyond what they can pick up for themselves on the way. If they survive the hardships and dangers of the journey they can also be sold at a fair price at the end of the expedition, provided no fly country has been traversed. Where expense is no object, and food supplies can be relied on, the ordinary porter is much more satisfactory. Camels, of course, would be preferable to either, and I found them invaluable when I reached the Rendile country in the course of my journey. They are, however, confined to certain districts, and are not available for the ordinary sportsman who sets out from Nairobi.

It is somewhat surprising that up to the present moment no serious effort has been made to domesticate the zebra, and thus cope with this difficulty of transport. Here we have a country where throughout the greater part, camels, horses, mules and donkeys are unable to live owing to the deadly tsetse fly. Means of transport must be found somehow, as there are neither railways, roads, nor navigable rivers to speak of; therefore the settler, the sportsman, and the traveller have to fall back upon the caravan porter, who from time immemorial has been the pack animal of East African wilds. Now that the country is attracting white men as farmers and ranchers, the question of labour is becoming acute, and instead of wandering about with

a load on his head, every available native is required for more remunerative work on the land.

I know it will be said that the zebra is a useless and vicious brute, and that it is impossible to train him or make him into a useful beast of burden ; but I challenge this prejudiced view, as I am convinced that, given a fair trial, the zebra will yet prove one of the most useful of East African animals. In the first place, it is immune from the deadly tsetse fly, and, being indigenous to the country, is not affected by the climate, and can stand the extremes of heat and cold without any harmful result. It also knows what food to pick up for itself in the wilds, and, unlike the mule, will not eat poisonous grasses and herbs, its instinct teaching it what to avoid. It is capable of carrying as heavy a load as a mule, and is as sure-footed, being able to gallop over the roughest ground, while its feet and legs are perfect for jungle work. The zebra is also more alive to the necessity of protecting itself from wild beasts, and seems to know at once when danger is at hand. Finally, it can cover greater distances without water than any pack animal except the camel.

It is true that certain half-hearted experiments have been made to domesticate these animals, and because these spasmodic efforts have failed, the zebras have been anathematized by those who know very little about them ; they are, alas, now looked

upon as little better than vermin, and instead of an effort being made to train these beautiful creatures, sportsmen are permitted to shoot them by the score. Of course it would never do to confine them in a small space while they were being broken in, as stale ground and lack of freedom would be enough to kill any wild animal. They should have constant changes of kraals and a fair amount of country to range over in captivity.

I very strongly maintain that if adequate trial were made, more especially with that fine-looking animal, the Grévy zebra, and proper attention paid to breeding, etc., the result would be more than satisfactory, and the problem of transport in the byways of East Africa completely solved.

It would, I think, astonish the British public if they knew how much of their money has gone during the past ten years in providing transport for East Africa and Uganda. The cost of maintaining a zebra farm, which in a short time might breed and turn out useful pack animals, would, in comparison, be a mere nothing. The eland is another beast that might be domesticated and used for transport purposes, and while I was in East Africa I advocated that experiments with both these animals should be tried on an extensive scale.

All this, however, is a digression, and I must return to our journey. On leaving the camp at the

Pes Swamp we crossed the Guaso Narok, and proceeded along the right bank of the river. A frowning escarpment runs parallel to the left bank, and is called by the Masai "Lebobonye Airobi Maritee," which being interpreted means "The escarpment on which grows the tree with the green leaves." There were very few of these trees to be seen on it, as the greater part of them had probably been cut down by the Masai, to be used in making their *manyattas*.

Owing to the trouble with the donkeys it was late in the evening when we reached camp at a place called Kilowash, a somewhat weird-looking spot on the banks of the Guaso Narok. Soon after our arrival I heard a guinea-fowl making a tremendous cackling in a tree not more than a hundred yards from my tent, so I went out with my shot gun to get it for dinner. I was rather surprised on reaching the place to see a leopard bound off into the gloom. He was evidently on the same errand as myself, "pot hunting," but I was just in time to save the guinea-fowl from his clutches and secure it for our table.

As the country from Rumuruti onward was practically unknown, I commenced to make a map of our route, and every day for the rest of the journey, while my companions did what shooting they could on their own account, I occupied myself almost





entirely with map-making, noting the heights of the various places we passed through as shown by the aneroid I brought with me, taking bearings of the more important landmarks, and making notes generally on the country and the people, and more especially on the variety and approximate numbers of the game seen on the journey. While engaged in this way I found Abbudi invaluable, as he could explain to me the meaning of the names of all the hills, nullahs, and mountains that we came across. I only trust that he was not inventing, as he was never without an answer.

The two Samburu guides were also much interested in my map-making, but at first looked upon it with considerable suspicion. It was not until I told them that it was a most useful and invaluable medicine for the journey that they could be persuaded freely to give me all the information they possessed. Each morning when we started off it was my custom to make one of them who was called Papai (father) stand in front of me and point with his spear in the direction of the next camp. I found that he was very reliable and did this most accurately. I then took the bearing with the compass, and drew a line across the paper in the direction pointed out. As we marched along I dotted in the path we travelled, as it went to right or left of this line, guided by the relative

position of two prominent objects well ahead of me. I also drew in such rivers, nullahs, hills, etc., as we passed on the way. Every hour I marked off three miles when I considered that was the average speed travelled at, and, of course, more or less according as the pace varied.



"TO SEE THAT THE PORTEKS CARRIED HIM GENTLY."

I always took the reading of the aneroid at the same hour in the afternoon, as I had found that it would vary over 200 feet at the same spot, according as it was taken at noon in the heat of the day, or at midnight. In this way I sketched in the entire route from Rumuruti to Marsabit, and I hope

my map will prove useful to some future traveller who happens to go that way.

Unfortunately very soon after leaving Rûmuruti B. began to feel ill, and although this gave us no cause for alarm, still it was most disappointing, as he was very anxious to shoot. I had to doctor him



THE JUNCTION.

for fever and headache, and keep him from going out in the afternoon sun. He also suffered a good deal from a painful foot and leg, and ultimately an abscess formed on the instep. This gave him a great deal of trouble, and part of the time he had to be carried in a hammock, or on a bed, while either Mrs. B. or I always walked beside him when we

got to a bad spot, to see that the porters carried him gently and carefully over the rough road. The country we passed through along the Guaso Narok was for the most part a good grass one and game was plentiful. Luckily for us the water was clear and sweet, a great rarity in the wilds, where it is usually muddy, warm and brackish.

Numbers of baboons were to be seen on the rocks close to the river. While I was out exploring one afternoon I came upon a large family of these human-like creatures, perched on a huge rock, which jutted up from the opposite bank of the river. I selected a position under the shade of a

spreading tree, which grew at the water's edge, and watched them for over an hour, my glasses enabling me to see every wrinkle in their ugly



THE GREVY.

[Mounted in Rowland Ward's Studios.]

faces, as they basked and frisked in the afternoon sunshine. There was one old male—a large black fellow, who was evidently the “king of the castle.” The way the females would clutch their offspring and get out of his path as he rambled round was most amusing, while if by chance a youngster got in his way he was rewarded with a hearty cuff on the ear. When they saw me watching them they all crowded to my side of the rock, apparently as much interested in my movements as I was in theirs.

Our last march before reaching the Guaso Nyiro was through dense bush, scrub, and euphorbia trees, where no game could be seen. The place where the Guaso Narok flows into the Guaso Nyiro is called “The Junction,” and is a noted camping ground for big-game hunters, as they can be almost certain of finding here the much-prized oryx beisa, a giraffe, if they wish one, and, with exceptional good luck, that shy and much sought after gazelle, the peculiar-looking long-necked gerenuk.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE MASAI

DURING our journey through Laikipia we came across many Masai *manyattas* and met a number of the proud and warlike people who dwell in them. Abbudi was always ready to talk about his nation, and as he strode along beside Aladdin he never tired of telling me endless tales of their various acts of prowess, and of warlike expeditions in which he himself had taken part. In the course of our many marches together I was able to glean from him much interesting information as to their peculiar manners and customs.

The Masai have already been so fully and scientifically described by such writers as Thomson, Hinde, Hollis, Merker, and others, that I can make no claim whatever for relating anything that is new, but will merely give a few details which either came

under my own personal observation or were told me from time to time by Abbudi.

At one time these people were the terror of the whole country, but of late years their power has been very much curtailed. On the death of their great chief Batian, about 1889, internal dissensions



HUT IN A MASAI MANYATTA.

arose between his two sons Sendeyo and Lenana, and warfare was carried on for some time between the partisans of the rival brothers until in the end Lenana was victorious, and became Leibon, *i.e.*, high priest and chief ruler of the whole nation. Soon after this, smallpox broke out among the tribe, and their numbers were very greatly reduced.

Rinderpest also made its appearance, and their cattle died in thousands, so that, reduced in numbers and deprived of all means of subsistence, the poor Masai were in a very sad plight.

The British then appeared upon the scene, and with the coming of the superior race, their last fragment of prestige and importance vanished.

They have now been allotted an excellent reserve on the cool highlands of Laikipia, where the country is well grassed and watered, and here they are rapidly increasing in numbers and wealth. I myself have noticed how greatly their flocks and herds have multiplied during the last decade. Where ten years ago only a very few cattle, sheep and goats were to be seen, now there are thousands, and in the course of my journey I must have seen at least 10,000 cattle and 30,000 sheep and goats.

When I asked Abbudi how many warriors could be collected on Laikipia he told me about 4,000, but as he was prone to exaggerate everything very much, I cut this number down by half, and should say that they could probably put 2,000 spears in the field ; and some day perhaps the bloodthirsty young warriors may want to use them.

In appearance the Masai are slender, with beautifully modelled limbs and regular features, which show they do not belong to the ordinary Bantu or negro type.\* Abbudi himself was supple and lithe



as a young lion, and held himself magnificently, while his silky dark brown skin shone like bronze in the sunshine. He had the prominent teeth which

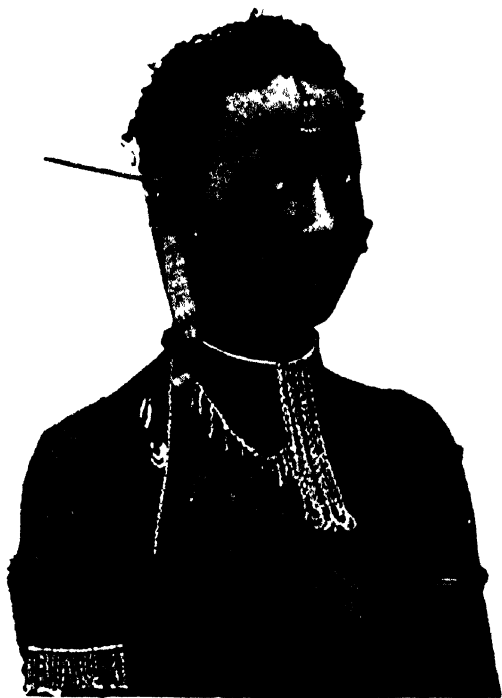


"IN APPEARANCE THE MASAI ARE SLENDER."

are characteristic of the Masai and result from their habit of eating meat in early childhood and tearing the flesh from the bone before the teeth are properly set. As the two lower incisors are always

extracted the whole expression of the mouth is rather peculiar.

Another feature which strikes the stranger very much is the enormous size of the earlobes, as from



"THE MASAI HAVE A HABIT OF DISTORTING THEIR EARS."

the days of their childhood the Masai have a habit of distorting their ears so that the lobe hangs down to a great length over the shoulder. This is considered a great beauty both by men and women, and they succeed in acquiring it by first making a small

hole in the lobe of the ear and stretching it by putting a small stick through it, and then thicker and thicker pieces until finally it becomes enormous and capable of holding such ornaments as a mustard tin or a jam pot!

I had among my *safari* a man who once tried to put in as an ear ornament an empty ox-tongue tin. The result was that the lobe split and hung down in two long tassels over his shoulder. When they got in his way too much, he used calmly to take hold of the two ends and tie them up in a knot! The dress of the ordinary Masai met with in the wilds usually consists of a tanned skin fastened over the shoulder and hanging down below the waist. They are very fond of adorning themselves with brass and copper wire, and the women of the tribe especially use any quantity of it as ornaments for the arms, legs and neck. The whole of the leg from ankle to knee is often encased in it, wound round in spirals to form a regular sheath. This must be exceedingly uncomfortable, but the women would endure any martyrdom rather than be deprived of it.

Both men and women smear their bodies with oil and red clay, and simply put on an extra quantity when they wish to appear particularly smart.

The life of a Masai divides itself into the three

distinct periods of Boyhood, Warriorhood and Elderhood. As they are essentially a warlike



THE PERIOD OF BOYHOOD.

people the middle period is by far the most important in their life.

During our many talks together I heard from Abbudi a great deal of his own personal history.

He could not remember anything about his mother, who was probably carried off by smallpox when he was a baby, but his father seems to have been a terrible old martinet, who frequently chastised him for his misdeeds. It was his chief duty as a boy to guard the goats and sheep, and bring them back safely to the *manyatta* in the evening. As a rule he enjoyed doing this very much and felt very important as he proudly stood with one leg drawn up and resting against the knee, keeping guard over his flock and holding his bow and arrow ready to warn off any intruder.

Sometimes, however, when he was not sufficiently vigilant he got into trouble. One day when he was about ten years old he was out as usual herding some goats, but instead of keeping guard as he ought to have done, he went comfortably to sleep under the shade of a tree, leaving the goats to take care of themselves, with the result that a leopard came and killed three of them! When the owner came out and saw what had happened, he went in search of Abbudi and having found him beat him, as he said, "*Kabisa, kabisa*," which means with a very heavy hand, and only that he eventually grovelled to the ground and seized some grass, it would have fared very badly with him. As soon as

he caught the grass the thrashing ceased, as he was now, as it were, holding the horns of the altar, grass being as sacred to the Masai as the altar to a devout Hebrew.

Abbudi's father came to his end in a very tragic way. It seems that he was a notorious cattle lifter, and one night he and a friend and some boys, of whom Abbudi was one, made a raid on a distant kraal belonging to another section of the Masai. They managed to get clear away with about twenty cows, but at dawn the robbery was discovered and hot pursuit taken up. Towards noon the little party of raiders got the cattle into a rocky ravine and hid them, as they were too tired to take them on any further that day. While they were resting here the pursuers arrived and speedily surrounded them, put Abbudi's father and his robber friend to death, and carried the boys off to their kraal as slaves.

From this servitude Abbudi was not free until he became a warrior, and even then he had to start his warrior life without a cow, goat, or sheep, which was of course a great indignity.

The Masai have a very complete and strict military organisation. All the men physically fit become soldiers at the age of about eighteen and serve until they are about thirty. The *manyatta* of the warriors stands isolated from all others, without a

fence round it, and here the young *morán*, as he is now called, enters upon the second, or warrior, stage of his existence. From the time that he becomes a soldier and during all the years of his service, he is not allowed to marry or to smoke, take snuff, or drink intoxicants. The main object of his life at this period is of course war, and all the discipline and self-denial which he must now undergo is calculated to make him a better and more efficient soldier.

Each *manyatta* elects a captain, who is generally one of the oldest and most experienced of the warriors, or may even be an elder. This man settles all disputes amongst the various members of the *manyatta*, and is usually a good speaker and chosen on account of his oratorical powers and reasoning abilities.

In addition, there is also a chief of a whole district, whose authority is recognised by all the *manyattas* in this area.

Of course, above all these is the *Leibon* or chief ruler (at present Lenana), to whom final appeal is made, and who is kept thoroughly informed of everything that goes on among his people by a complete secret-service organisation.

The warriors devote a great deal of time and attention to exercises calculated to make the limbs supple, and to train and develop the muscles. I.

have several times been present at their physical drills, and found them most interesting and instructive. Jumping up and down a great deal on the



"EXERCISES CALCULATED TO MAKE THE LIMBS SUPPLE."

same spot, so as to exercise and strengthen the leg muscles, is an important feature of these gymnastics.

The result is certainly well worth the trouble they take, as the Masai are wonderful runners and are capable of covering very long distances, day



after day, without showing the slightest sign of fatigue.

The *moran* also takes a great delight in keeping his weapons brightly polished and ready at any moment for the fray. These consist of a spear, short sword and knobkerry. The Masai spear is a most formidable-looking weapon with a blade about two and a half feet long with a uniform width of about two inches almost to the point. The short two-edged sword is sheathed in a rude scabbard of tough hide, and is worn strapped to the waist by means of a home-made belt. The knobkerry is a club made of very hard wood, principally used to throw at an enemy before coming to close quarters with the spear, and also to kill any weak, old, or useless captured women by knocking them on the head with it, as the Masai scorn to sully their spears with woman's blood.

The Masai shields are elliptical in shape—about three feet six inches long by two feet broad. They are generally made of buffalo hide and often ornamented with very curious and interesting designs painted in white or red clay and black charcoal, the right half of the shield being often different in design from the left. As a rule they are not made by the Masai themselves, but by the Wandorobo, a subject tribe who hunt game for food and pre-

pare the hides for their masters. The spears and swords are manufactured by a special tribe of iron workers, the Il-Kuhoni, from whom they are purchased by the Masai.

Many a time as Abuddi walked along by my side has he with glowing eyes and eager mien told me stories of the various warlike expeditions he had taken part in against the Wakamba, Wakikuyu and other tribes surrounding Masai-land. He always bewailed the fact that these raids were no longer possible, now that the British ruled the country, and from what I gathered the hot-blooded warriors are not at all pleased at the curb which has been placed upon them by our administration.

The object of these forays was of course to capture cattle, upon the possession of which the Masai depend for their very existence. Before an expedition of this kind is engaged in many preliminary preparations have to be made—spies have to be sent out to investigate, the chief medicine-man has to be consulted as to whether the enterprise will be successful or not, and the blessing of *Ngai* (God) has to be invoked by continual monotonous chanting. The warriors have then to gorge themselves for several days on bullocks' blood and flesh so as to make themselves strong and ferocious for the coming warfare. Some drink the juice

extracted from the bark of the mimosa tree, which is said to render the *moran* utterly fearless and indifferent to danger of any kind.

Abbudi told me how very proud he felt when for the first time he arrayed himself for an expedition of this kind in the full panoply of war. This consists of a weird head-dress, made of ostrich feathers, fixed firmly into a leather frame which encircles the face and gives a most ferocious expression to it. Occasionally a warrior is seen wearing a busby made of the head and mane of a lion, but he is not allowed to wear this unless he has killed one of these beasts with his spear. A long piece of cloth with a red stripe down the middle is worn round the neck and flowing out behind. A cape of hawks' feathers covers the shoulders, while round the legs are placed anklets made of the long hair of the collabus monkey. A rude belt is fastened round the waist, and this secures the short sword at his right side, while the knobkerry is thrust through on the left. The long spear is carried in the right hand and the curiously emblazoned shield in the left.

When a body of young warriors set proudly out on the warpath arrayed in this weird fashion, they formed a truly savage and imposing spectacle, and it is no wonder that they inspired terror wherever they went.

In their hours of leisure the Masai are a grave

and dignified people. They do not frisk or frolic or indulge in the childish pleasures so usually associated with the ordinary untutored negro. They care little or nothing about music, and I have never seen one of them with a musical instrument of any kind in



"NO WONDER THAT THEY INSPIRED TERROR"

his hand. They probably look upon this form of art as an effeminate pastime entirely beneath their dignity. Singing is rarely indulged in except when all join in a weird droning chant to invoke the blessing and goodwill of *Ngai* on themselves and their flocks,

or when preparing for war or celebrating the victory afterwards.

The Masai is, however, a wonderful orator, and possesses the gift of speech and power of expression in a very marked degree. He may be a little bit too wordy and argumentative, and no conclusion of any kind is ever reached without an immense amount of talk on both sides. All the same, a Masai speech is a real work of art, and abounds in felicitous phrases and appropriate similes. The orator uses a stick to emphasize his words, and this he raises and lowers to give point to his sentences, occasionally bringing it down to the ground with a whack. When the next speaker begins, he takes possession\* of the stick and uses it in the same manner.

It is the custom among the Masai for the young girls as well as the warriors to live in the warrior kraals.

Abbudi told me that life went very pleasantly for him at this time, for when he was not away on a raiding expedition he was waited upon and loved by a pretty little Masai girl, for whom he appears to have had a genuine affection. He constantly talked of her to me and said that he hoped I would give him leave to go and see her when we returned to Nairobi, as she lived in a *manyatta* about three days' journey from that place.

↓ often chaffed him about this little girl, and said that by the time we got back she would probably have forgotten all about him ; but he would not admit this, for, as he remarked, " Have I not given her mother a number of presents for her as an earnest, and is she not living at this very moment with my own particular friend ? " Abbudi did not seem to have any idea of jealousy, and, indeed, this emotion is a feeling which the Masai do not appear to understand.

Of course Abbudi had not reached the Elder stage and therefore he had not yet taken unto himself a wife, but he told me that he fully intended to make this little *dito* (girl) his wife as soon as ever he could collect sufficient money to buy three cows, which apparently was the price her father had placed on her head. It was with this object that he had left the warrior *manyatta* and the life led by his forefathers to become a scout in the service of the British Government.

When the *moran* has completed his military service, a Council of the Elders is held at which it is decided to admit him to Elderhood. The warrior then makes his choice of a wife and pays over to her parents the price demanded for her. He forthwith, without any further marriage ceremony, establishes her in a hut in the *manyatta* of the Elders and settles down to a life of ease and indulgence. The

restrictions which he was obliged to practise as a *moran* are now no longer observed, and he may drink, smoke, and take snuff as much as he likes. He usually takes full advantage of this and indulges in all three pretty freely. He also dearly loves a gossip, and talks by the hour with his friends over past prowess and exploits in the days of their



"CARRY ALL . . . WHICH CANNOT BE HEAPED ON TO  
THE DONKEYS."

warriorhood. He does not do any work, although he sometimes goes out with the cattle and helps the boys to tend them.

The real work of the *nianyatta* falls on the old women, who do all the fetching and carrying and cleaning up. It is their duty when seeking fresh pastures to carry all the household goods which

cannot be heaped on to the donkeys, build the new huts, and make the *boma*, or fence round them. They also guard the *manyatta* at night time and are



"HER DISTORTED AND SCARRED HEAD."

responsible for the safety of the cattle, so woe betide them if any wild animal breaks in and steals a cow, sheep or goat. It sometimes happens that one of these women falls a victim to a beast of



prey. I have myself met an old lady who in the days of her youth had a most terrible experience with a lion. The brute knocked her down, seized her by the head, and was dragging her off to devour her, when her screams attracted some warriors who ran and beat off the lion and rescued her. How she ever survived the terrible mauling she got is a mystery, as even now, in her old age, her distorted and scarred head (as shown in the photograph) gives a fairly good idea of what she must have endured.

The young wives do not do any hard work, but as soon as they begin to get old, they become drudges and their place is taken by younger women. Strange to say they do not resent this and seem quite cheerful and contented with their lot.

It is a Masai Elder's great ambition to have great herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats, and also as many children as possible, especially sons. Girls are rather at a discount, but still they have a certain value in his eyes, as at the time of their marriage they bring in at least two or three cows!

The Masai does not seem to have any definite religion, although he has a vague kind of belief in an all-powerful being called *Ngai*, to whom he prays when he wants any special favour. Anything that strikes him as particularly wonderful is also called *Ngai*—such as lightning, thunder, a railway engine, etc.

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On asking Abbudi one day about his ideas as to a future state, he told me that he hoped he would sit in a *manyatta*,<sup>\*</sup> with plenty of meat to eat and milk to drink, have many wives to attend to his wants, and children to look after his phantom flocks and herds !

## CHAPTER XVI

### ACROSS COUNTRY TO THE GUASO NYIRO

At the Junction I had a serious talk with B., and strongly advised him, as he was not in very good health, to return to civilisation. Mrs. B., too, was anxious about him and thought it would be wiser to go back, but he insisted that he felt much better, and would soon be quite fit again. He was most eager to come on, as so far he had had rather a poor time, and wished very much to get some more shooting and see something of the new country before turning back to Nairobi. I, of course, could only advise in any case, so I somewhat reluctantly consented to his accompanying me further on my journey.

The Guaso Nyiro flows to the north at the Junction, and continues in this direction for about thirty miles, when it takes a sharp bend and bears round in a great sweep towards the south-east, finally striking off to the east, in which direction it

continues until it loses itself in the great Lorian Swamp, about 200 miles away. It is a rather curious fact that two other East African rivers, the Athi and the Tana, a little further to the south, pursue a somewhat similar course.

Instead of following the river along its tortuous windings, I now determined to cut across country to the eastward of the Junction until we should strike it again as it was flowing towards the south-east. I calculated that the distance would not be more than fifty miles, and I depended on the Samburu guide to lead me to a couple of water-holes which he said he knew of on the way.

The first of these was at a place called Turah, in the Samburu country, some sixteen miles from the Junction. Our guide accordingly led us practically due east for the first march, across the beautiful plain of Eljogi, and over undulating hills and lovely grass valleys. It was a magnificent piece of country, and abounded in game of all sorts—rhino, giraffe, oryx, Grant's gazelle, Thomson's gazelle, ostriches dotted here and there, and troops of zebra everywhere.

Before setting out I had exchanged horses with B., lending him Aladdin, who was much easier to ride than his own pony, which was an ugly, stubborn brute, so exactly like a mule in manner and appearance that he was always called "The Mule."



We had not gone very far before I saw, under a tree a little way to our right, an old rhino with her calf. We thought it would be interesting to study them at close quarters, so leaving the *safari* to pursue its way quietly across the plain, Mrs. B. and I rode off to view the mother and her baby. The old rhino was furious at our intrusion, and when we got to within about 100 yards of her, charged viciously out at us as hard as she was able to come, putting us to instant flight. Seeing that she could not overtake us, she gave up the chase and returned to her shelter under a tree. A few minutes afterwards, while I was galloping back to rejoin the *safari*, "The Mule" crossed his legs, turned a complete somersault, and rolled right over me. The *safari*, in whose sight we had been all the time, instantly set up a shout, thinking that I was either killed or badly hurt, but luckily I was none the worse for the fall.

It was a thousand pities that B. could not shoot in this ideal place, especially as he had come so far to do so, but his foot had again become very painful, and he soon had to dismount and be carried in a hammock for the rest of the way.

While we were crossing this interesting stretch of country I saw a rhino with the longest horns that it had, yet been my good fortune to come across. I was very anxious that Mrs. B. should get

him, so, as the place where the brute lay was rather close to our line of march, I halted the *safari* and had B.'s hammock put into a safe place beside a big tree before we set off to stalk him.

The rhino was resting under the shade of a euphorbia, and we had to make a half-circle round him so that we might have him to windward of us and thus be able to get up to close quarters without being discovered. There was a convenient clump of bush, at a distance of about forty yards from the drowsy brute, which I hoped we should be able to reach without giving him the alarm. We got safely to this bit of covert, but found that the ground rose between us and the rhino, so that we could only see the long ridge of his back above the crest. We accordingly stalked on a little higher up the slope, just beyond the bushes, and then to our astonishment saw not one rhino but a family party of three! By some means, too, they had all got disturbed, and our friend with the long horns, whom we had hoped to find sleepily killing time, was all on the alert, head and tail fully cocked, ready either to charge an enemy or flee down into the valley towards the river.

I signed to Mrs. B. to fire, and she knelt down, took a steady aim, and plumped a bullet straight into him, for I plainly heard the smack of the lead as it struck his tough hide. He immediately whirled round and disappeared down the slope on the far

side, taking, as we believed, the other two with him. We quickly followed, but, on reaching the top of the rise, suddenly found ourselves face to face with the female and her calf, both regarding us very resentfully. I at once told Mrs. B. to lie down and keep perfectly still, and as the mother rhino was about to charge I had to put a bullet into her to warn her off. Upon this she turned and trotted off with her youngster, apparently none the worse for the lead.

In the meantime the old male with the fine horns could be seen gradually descending, at a steady trot, the long slope which led to the bushes by the river, where he hoped to find safety. We longed to follow him and bag the magnificent trophy which his head would have made, but felt obliged to return to the *safari*, as we did not wish to leave B. alone for any length of time.

Later on in the day Mrs. B. made up for her ill luck with the rhino by bowling over a very fine oryx on the run, at a distance of 150 yards. On seeing this the whole *safari* shouted out in great glee that the *Bibi* (Lady) was a wonderful shot and that the *Bwanas* (Masters) could not have done so well. It was indeed a splendid shot, and the porters were naturally delighted with the kill, as it gave them fresh meat for their evening meal.

. When we reached Turah the water which we had



brought with us from the Guaso Nyiro was pretty well exhausted and the men all rushed to the tiny waterhole to get a drink. As the spring was a very slow one it took a long time for all to get satisfied. I noticed that when Abbudi got hold of the pannikin he was not content with the water alone,



"BOWLED OVER A VERY FINE ORYX."

but mixed a handful of mud from the bottom of the spring with it, and swallowed the mixture with great relish. When I asked why he drank such a horrible concoction, he told me that it was to prepare his inside for the trials of the journey, and that it was absolutely necessary to do this when coming into a

new country and drinking its water for the first time. I quite expected to have him on the sick list next day, but to my surprise he was none the worse for his muddy dose, nor was he ever ill throughout the journey.

We were quickly surrounded by the Samburu, headed by their chief Lesegetetee, who lived in a *manyatta* close by. They were all very much astonished to see white people and especially a white lady, and a tremendous amount of chattering and speculation went on amongst them about us. The reason of our coming was discussed and our personal appearance criticised pretty freely. Mrs. B. was soon the centre of attraction and great was the admiration which they expressed for her hair, which was very long, and which she wore in a single plait down her back. The warriors love to wear their hair in this fashion, but of course they never get it to grow to anything like the length of Mrs. B.'s. One of the elders ran aside to bring up an old pal, and then pointing to the hair exclaimed, "Sedai, sedai?" ("Isn't it beautiful, beautiful?")

They were all very kindly disposed and hospitable, and brought us fresh milk to drink. This would have been a great treat, only unfortunately their milk vessels, which are gourds, are cleaned by being held over the smoke of a greenwood or cow-dung fire, and in consequence of this the odour of the

vessel taints the milk through and through. •The flavour is most unpleasant to a European, but the native loves it and would think nothing of milk without it. It is an acquired taste and one which grows even on white people, for some old stagers in the country, who live in the wilds, say that the milk is improved by this smoky flavour.

We had great difficulty in persuading these people at Turah to milk the cows direct into our own vessels, as they are very superstitious and feared that it might bring some evil on their cattle. However, a judicious present of some cloth and wire, together with Abbudi's persuasive tongue, after a time overcame all difficulties and we succeeded in getting the pure milk without the unpleasant smoky taste. We always tried the same means afterwards when we met any of the Samburu or Rendile, and were usually successful in overcoming their scruples.

Our camp at Turah was beautifully cool, as it stood at a height of 5,400 feet above sea level. In the evening, as I was sitting in my camp chair admiring the beautiful view, I was stealthily approached by a well-made but extremely dark-skinned youth. I did not altogether like the look of his face, which had a rather treacherous and cunning expression. On being asked what he wanted he explained in a very low voice, but in good Swahili, that he was most anxious to come,

with me on my long journey, as he was familiar with the country to Marsabit and Rudolf, and friendly with all the chiefs of these parts, who knew him well. I then asked him how it was that he could speak Swahili so fluently, and he replied that he had been boy to the Bwana Neumann. "Oh!" I said, "then you are Karogi." "Ndio, Bwana" ("Yes, Master"), he answered, with an oily smile.

Now when I was at Rumuruti I had been specially asked by the District Commissioner there to bring this same Karogi back with me if by any chance I came across him in my travels, as he was wanted for some misdeed or other which he had been up to. I thought therefore that it might be as well to take the rogue with me, for Neumann had been a great wanderer in these parts, and Karogi would undoubtedly know the country and people well, and might therefore be very useful to me. By keeping a close eye on him I hoped to be able to steer him clear of mischief. I rather fancy, however, that on several occasions he eluded my vigilance.

While we were at this camp at Turah the painful abscess from which B. was suffering broke at last, which afforded him very great relief.

I was now anxious to continue my journey to the east, but my guides told me I could not do so, and must turn northwards, as there was no water to the

east, and the distance to the Guaso Nyiro was too great to be covered in one march. As the country was entirely unknown to me, I did not feel justified in striking out a path for myself with only a limited supply of water in leaky tins, so I felt bound to follow the advice of the guides, which is not always disinterested. Accordingly, northward we started, more or less following the bend of the Turah river until it joined the Rumathe a couple of miles further on, and then continuing our journey along the latter. The path was exceedingly precipitous and bad, for we were shut in on both sides by high rocky mountains, and the beds of both rivers, and the sides of their banks, were composed of great masses of gneissic rock. My aneroid informed me that in a march of about four miles we made a descent of almost 1,000 feet. In some places there was a perpendicular drop of from fifty to sixty feet in the river bed, and the waterfalls must be magnificent when the river is in flood. The highest we saw was in the bed of the Rumathe, and as it possessed no native name, I called it after Mrs. B., as she was undoubtedly the first European lady who had ever been in these parts.

On this march I happened to be following the *safari*, instead of leading it as usual, and was surprised to find, strewn all along the path traversed

by the porters, more than a precious load of beans which they were carrying as *posho* for the men. This stream of food continued until I reached camp, and when I found out who the culprit was he calmly told me hadn't noticed it. As it was a very serious matter to allow our food to be wasted in this careless fashion in the wilderness, I had the rascal severely punished and put on half-rations for a week. This effectually stopped any further leakage of supplies throughout the journey. At our camp by the Rumathe we found a very fine spring of good water, which is permanent and capable of supplying any number of men and beasts throughout the year. I panned some sand from the bed of the Rumathe, and from several other river beds, for gold, but unfortunately never got so much as a "colour."

From this place we continued our journey, through bush and across many ravines, until we struck the Guaso Nyiro again. On the way we saw plenty of Grant's gazelle, Thomson's gazelle, oryx, impala, and waterbuck, also a rhino and a leopard.

This march was a very trying one, as there was neither water nor shade to be had on the way, and the heat was very great. All, therefore, were delighted when at last the river was reached, and

the exhausted men and animals rushed down eagerly to drink their fill. One of the donkeys, more venturesome than the rest, went in too far and thereby came to an untimely end, for as he was greedily drinking, a great crocodile suddenly rose to the surface, seized him and dragged him under—and that was the last we saw of him.

## CHAPTER XVII

### ALONG THE GUASO NYIRO

Our camp at the Guaso Nyiro was pitched under some magnificent trees close to the river at a place named Elongatta Embolyoi, where there is a ford leading to a place called Saye in the Reserve. I now discovered that the reason the guides were so anxious to lead us in this direction was because their own *manyatta* was here, and they naturally wanted to visit it and bring me to their chief Leleleit, who had indeed given them emphatic orders to do so before sending them to Rumuruti. The fact that a white man visited his village would, he imagined, give him an extra amount of prestige among the other chiefs of his tribe.

Leleleit himself, wrapped in a neatly fringed but grimy piece of amerikani, soon called on me and brought with him a present of some milk and a sheep, for which I duly paid him by a suitable present in return. He was accompanied by his



old blind wife, and asked me in simple faith, as if it were a small matter that I could easily put right, to be so good as to restore her sight, and also to cure his little son, who was covered with bad ulcers.

I told him that I feared it was impossible for me to cure his wife, as her blindness was the work of *Ngai* (God) and it would be useless for me to attempt to undo it. I comforted him, however, by telling him that I would cure his little son by giving him some *daiva* (medicine) for daily application.

I decided to remain at this place for another day, as I was anxious to explore the hilly country, to the west of our camp, through which the Guaso Nyiro flows after taking the sharp bend to the eastward. I also wished to obtain some idea of the game that was to be found in this direction.

We accordingly set out westward in the early dawn along the southern bank of the Guaso Nyiro. I was anxious to cover as much ground in the cool of the morning as was possible, and made my way towards a high peak named Nandaydo, from which I hoped to obtain a good view of the surrounding country, and, perhaps, be able to see as far as the eastern bend of the river.

The sun had not been up for more than an hour when Abbudi came to tell us that he had spotted a fine waterbuck, so Mrs. B. set off to stalk it, and,

taking advantage of some very favourable ground, succeeded in getting to close range, and adding this much-prized trophy to her bag.

We made rather slow progress, as the country



"ADDING THIS MUCH-PRIZED TROPHY TO HER BAG."

was covered in all directions with thick thorn trees and scrub, through which we had to force our way as best we could. There was, of course, no path along which we could travel, save now and again

when we were lucky enough to strike an animal track going in our direction.

I was all the time somewhat anxious on Mrs. B.'s account, lest a rhino should suddenly dive out of the



"BOWLED OVER HER FIRST IMPALA."

bush and charge us, as was the case when Mrs. S. had such a very narrow escape on Christmas Day. I therefore sent Abbudi with a couple of Samburu spearmen to scout on ahead, while the gun-bearers

were kept close at hand with the spare rifles in case of need ; but, much to my relief, we were not troubled with rhino on this occasion. It was a rather wearisome march, the monotony of which was broken by the occasional glimpse of an animal as it dashed from our view into the thick bush. Once, as we



" BREAKFAST UNDER A SHADY TREE "

approached a little open glade in silence, we spied through the branches the form of a reddish-coloured animal grazing in the midst of it, quite unconscious of our approach. I signalled to the party to halt, and we remained motionless while Mrs. B. stalked and bowled over her first impala.

As we had started with the dawn and had nothing

to eat except a biscuit and a cup of coffee before leaving camp, we decided to halt and have breakfast under a shady tree, as the sun's rays by this time were very fierce. We had brought out a kettle and teapot and everything we should require for breakfast and lunch in the wilds, and it was not long



KAROGI.

"KAROGI AND ANOTHER SAMBURU."

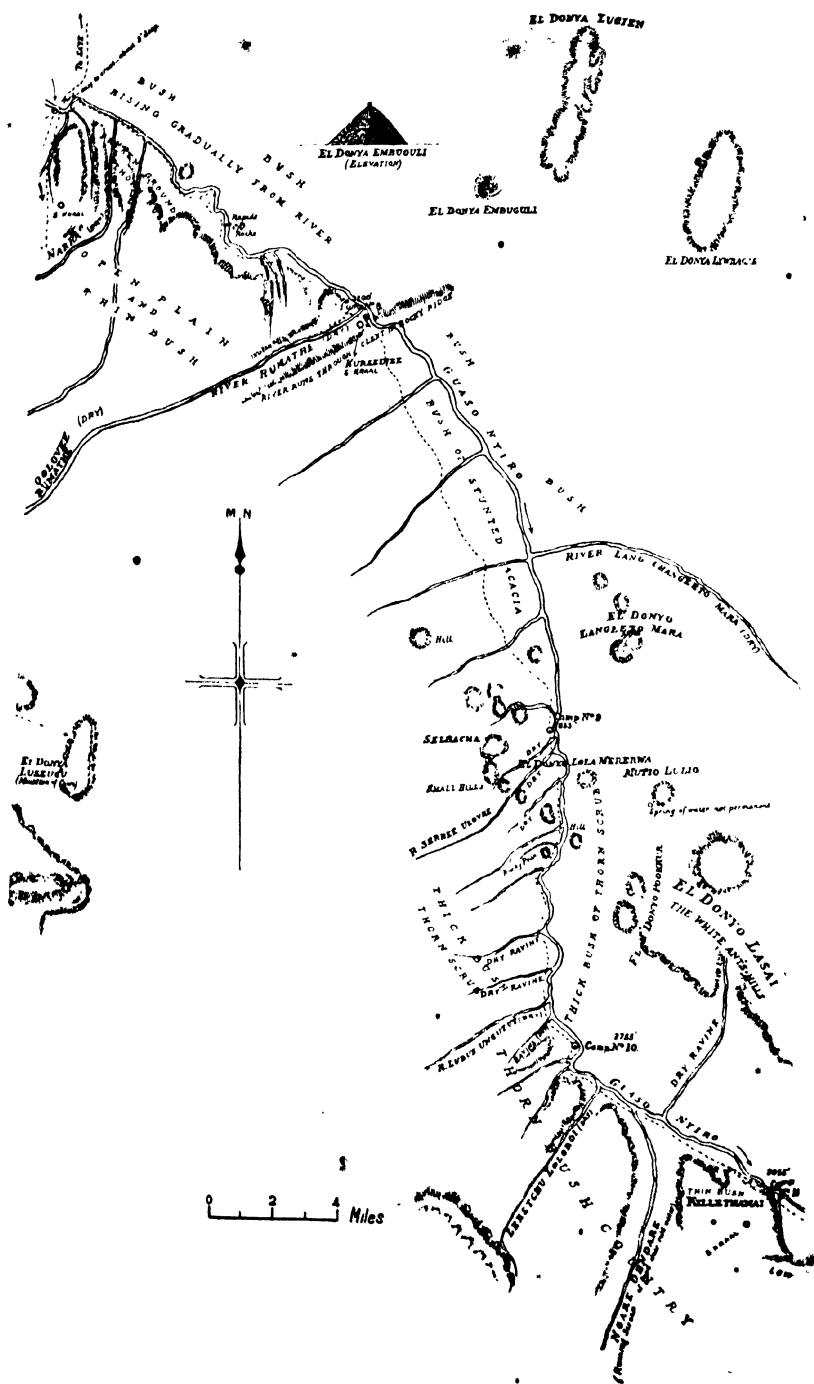
before Abbudi had a fire lit, and the kettle, filled with water from the Guaso Nyiro, boiling cheerily over the embers.

Meanwhile Karogi and another Samburu had cut up the impala and made a Samburu oven, and now commenced to roast a few dainty bits to add to our

feast. The Samburu method of cooking meat is as follows. First with the aid of a long knife a trench is dug in the ground about nine inches deep and fifteen inches wide, with outlets for a draught ; this trench is then filled with sticks and branches, etc., which are set fire to and allowed to blaze away until nothing remains but glowing embers, which almost fill up the trench ; sticks of hard wood are placed across the top, and on this the meat is grilled. I can answer for it that the resulting flavour is most excellent ; at all events we found impala, roasted in Samburu fashion, exceedingly good. Practically every bit of the animal was eaten by ourselves and followers, Abbudi pronouncing it almost as good as a sheep, which is high praise coming from a Masai. Meat grilled directly after it is killed is fairly tender, but the same meat cooked an hour or two afterwards is often very tough.

After breakfast we started off again, hoping for lions or other big game, but we saw nothing except two female gerenuk, which we did not of course attempt to molest in any way. I noticed the fresh spoor of a herd of buffalo, which had apparently a short time previously crossed over the river into the Reserve.

• We finally reached Mount Nandaydo, but I was much disappointed with the view obtained from the



summit. Away to the west nothing was to be seen except barren mountains and hills, stretching in a broken line to the great mountain of Laigrisia, which stands on the north side of the river. We could follow the course of the Guaso Nyiro for some distance, winding its tortuous way with difficulty through this rugged and inhospitable region. The Reserve to the north of the river presented a bleak and uninviting appearance, and it struck me that the beasts in it were in a natural sanctuary which would not be readily invaded by civilised man. After taking notes of everything of importance within sight, we made our way down from the mountain and returned to camp by a different route. On the way we met a rhino rather unexpectedly, but luckily he took to his heels, and we reached our tents at Elongatta without any further adventure. We were all glad to retire early, so as to have a good rest to prepare us for the journey which we proposed to commence along the Guaso Nyiro on the following morning.

My plan now was to push on along the river, which for many miles forms the southern boundary of the Reserve, until I should reach somewhere about the 38th degree of east longitude. Then I intended to turn northward towards Marsabit, which is a mountainous district lying on the 38th meridian, and explore the country as far as that



place, and beyond if necessary, to see if a range of mountains or other physical feature existed which would form a good and suitable natural eastern boundary to the Reserve. If circumstances permitted I then intended to mark out a northern boundary as far as Lake Rudolf, returning through the heart of the Reserve; but, as we shall see later, it was impossible to carry out this part of my programme.

I had given instructions that the camp was to be roused early. Accordingly, at sunrise, everything being ready, we said good-bye to Leleleit and set off along the right bank of the Guaso Nyiro. It would have been more agreeable to have marched all the time along the banks of the river, under the shade of the fine trees that in places grow along the water's edge, but it was not always possible to do this on account of the dense undergrowth and great masses of rock which here and there barred the way.

The country to the right and left of our route was more or less broken and intersected with dry ravines, while there was thick bush, mainly of wait-a-bit thorns, everywhere. The heat was intense, and there was no shelter of any kind save what was scantily afforded by a few stunted acacias or weird-looking euphorbias.

Away to our left front could be seen a peculiar,

cone-shaped hill with what appeared to be a square block of stone exactly capping the apex. This hill is called by the natives Embuguli, which means



"UNDER THE SHADE OF THE TINE TREES"

"vessel," as it is somewhat the shape of the Samburu gourd in which they carry water or milk.

Our first camp was at a place called Kurseine, where the river narrows into a thread of water,

rushing through a deep cleft in a rocky ridge which crosses it almost at right angles. It is a hot, inhospitable and uninviting spot, but the few Samburu whom we met there with their flocks of sheep and goats seemed to thrive in this arid waste.

During our daily marches along the river we saw a great variety of game, especially impala, oryx, and the beautiful Grévy zebra. Gerenuk also began to be less rare, and we often caught glimpses of them as they scampered off through the bush. Waterbuck too were particularly numerous, but I never saw a good head on the Guaso Nyiro, and the horns seem to run considerably smaller than those of their kinsmen on the Athi or Tana rivers. One day as I marched along with the *safari* I was astonished to see one of these antelopes standing in a shallow part of the river quite close to the passing line of porters, taking absolutely no notice of the men. One or two of the *pagazis*, more keen-sighted than the rest, shouted out "He's blind, he's blind," and, dropping their loads, rushed into the river and soon had their knives into the poor beast's throat. I think this waterbuck must have been deaf as well as blind, as he paid no attention to the noise and shouting, and was very easily dispatched. It is a most unusual thing to find a feeble beast both blind and deaf living to a good old age in

the wilds, where there are so many beasts of prey seeking what they may devour.

I was glad to find that B. seemed somewhat better, and was able to do a little shooting and secure specimens of gerenuk, waterbuck, and impala. Mrs. B. was as successful as usual, and among other trophies secured a good oryx after a long and trying stalk.

As we were marching quietly along soon after leaving Kurseine, my Samburu guide, Papai, suddenly showed signs of great excitement, and drew our attention to a tiny bird, fluttering and twittering in front of us in a very curious fashion. On asking him through Abbudi what its antics meant, he replied, "He is telling us where to get honey." I was naturally very much interested, and when Papai asked me if I would halt the *safari* for a little while so that he might go and rob the nest, I willingly consented and myself accompanied the old Samburu, who now relinquished to the tiny bird his rôle of guide. The little thing, which was barely the size of a wren, twittered and chirruped and fluttered along from one bush to another, looking round pertly all the time to see if we were following. In this way it led us on for about a quarter of a mile, until at last it came to a dead stop, and took up its position on a tree, where it remained motionless.

Papai then told us that we were now close to the

honey, and must be on the look-out for the bees coming and going. In a few seconds we discovered them entering a tiny hole in a tree, not a dozen



"WE VERY SOON HAD AN OPENING MADE."

yards from where our cunning little guide had stopped.

We very soon had an opening made sufficiently large for Papai to thrust his hand into the hollow, and in this way he removed several honey-combs full of the most delicious golden honey that it has.

ever been my good fortune to taste. He took not the slightest notice of the bees, though they flew all round him and some of them stung him. We were much pleased with our spoil, and left a fair share of it behind as a reward for the trusty little guide who had led us along so skilfully.

Although we passed numerous ravines daily in our march, yet these were always dry, so it was quite a surprise when at last we came to a stream called Ngare Oendare, flowing from the direction of Mount Kenya, and filled from bank to bank with good, clear, cold running water.

Soon after passing this stream, as we neared our camping ground at a place called Killethamia, I happened to notice that Mrs. B. looked pale and ill and rode along quite listlessly. In a little time she complained of a violent headache, and I feared that she had got a touch of sun, especially as she had been walking along in the fierce heat holding an umbrella over B., who was not well on this march. As soon as we reached camp I had the tent pitched hastily in the shade, and prescribed complete rest. Within an hour fever set in, and I knew from the feel of her wrist that it was pretty high, but I was not prepared for the shock I received when, on taking her temperature, I found it was over  $104^{\circ}$ . I immediately resorted to my usual plan for reducing temperature, which is to

give copious draughts of very hot tea on the top of phenascetin, and cover the patient up in a pile of blankets. Mrs. B. naturally objected very much to this drastic proceeding, but on being told that it was the only way she would get fit, quickly resigned herself to the discomfort. In less than an hour she was bathed in perspiration, and the temperature went down to  $101^{\circ}$ . For the next three days her temperature kept rising and falling, and in the end she was so weak that she could hardly move.

Of course it was a very anxious time for me, as B. was also far from well, and I had the whole strain of the double illness on my shoulders, far away in the *nyika* and cut off from all possibility of medical aid. I little realised at the time I was doctoring Mrs. B. that before so very long our rôles would be reversed, as it was my misfortune to be struck down by a severe illness, which would probably have made an end of me but for her skilful nursing.

It was a relief to find that my patient made a very rapid recovery. On the fourth day the fever abated, and Mrs. B. was well enough to be carried in a hammock, so we left Killethamia and made a short march along the river.

I noticed some of the genuine tsetse-fly, with their peculiar crossed wings, in this neighbourhood and feared for our horses, as a single bite from on

of these pests would in a short time prove fatal. I therefore ordered two men to watch each horse and flick off any flies that attempted to settle on them. It was probably owing to these precautions that the horses escaped, but as none of the other animals died, it is possible that the tsetse-fly of these parts may not be infected.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### AN ADVENTURE WITH A CROCODILE

WHENEVER the men of the *safari* had a chance they spent their time fishing in the Guaso Nyiro, and many of them were very successful. One man who was known by the name of Nyumbu (mule) was most expert with the rod, and daily brought us a huge fish for our table. Although rather soft and full of bones, it made a very acceptable addition to our usual diet.

At our next camping-place our fisherman had a very narrow escape indeed, and as all the circumstances connected with it were most extraordinary and dramatic, I must relate the entire adventure.

On this particular morning I happened to be riding ahead of the *safari* on the look-out for a suitable camping-place, when I suddenly came upon an impala and, knowing that we were in want of some camp meat, I made a hasty shot at him as

he fled away through the scrub. My bullet struck him and knocked him head over heels, but before I could reach him he picked himself up and



"NYUMBU" WAS MOST EXPERT WITH THE ROD.

made for the river. I fired again but missed, and then ran to the river bank, fully expecting to see him making his way across, but there was no trace of him to be discovered anywhere. I

was very much astonished at this, as I could not understand how a beast wounded so badly could get away so quickly ; but after searching in every direction I gave him up and turned my attention to the selection of our camping ground, which I chose close by, under the shade of some large trees.

As soon as the tents were pitched Nyumbu went down to the river to fish as usual, and was just about to step off the bank on to what he took to be a log, when the apparent log gave a slight movement and he saw that it was the back of a crocodile ! The man was luckily able to draw back, and rushed up the slope, calling out, "*Bwana, mamba ! mamba !*" (" Master, a crocodile ! a crocodile !"). We all happened to be close at hand, so I seized my rifle and ran down to the river, and seeing the hideous creature's back close under the bank quickly put a bullet into it. Instantly there was a terrific heaving and writhing in the water, which the reptile lashed about in all directions, though he seemed unable to get away. Seeing this Abbudi ran down to the water's edge, stepped on to a bough which projected out over the river and thrust his spear with all his might, deep into the creature's back. The moment the crocodile felt the steel he twisted himself round on his tail with indescribable speed and viciousness, snapped at the spear, whipped it

clean out of Abbudi's hand, as well as out of his own back, and flung it yards away to the bottom of the river!

I never in all my life saw such an astonished and crestfallen expression as appeared on Abbudi's face, and indeed it was no wonder, for the rapidity with which the brute had turned on him was incredible. His position was now highly dangerous, but before the crocodile could whip round again to make a second grab, I put another couple of bullets into his spine, thus rendering him quite helpless.

In the midst of all this excitement, and while the crocodile was lashing about and snapping his vice-like jaws, Mrs. B., forgetting that she was still an invalid, jumped on to the branch beside Abbudi to get a better view of what was going on. This was a most unwise proceeding, but fortunately the reptile was too badly hit to be able to do any damage.

As soon as he was quite dead we had a rope fastened round him, and with the aid of a dozen willing hands hauled him up out of the river. The most extraordinary part of the whole occurrence then happened, for when we opened him up, we found inside him the half of a freshly-eaten impala! There was no doubt that it was the one which I had shot and which had disappeared so mysteriously

after making its way to the river bank. It was no wonder that I could not find him, as he must even then have been in the maw of the crocodile, which of course had caught him and dragged him under as soon as he attempted to struggle across the stream.



"BENT ALMOST TO A RIGHT ANGLE BY THE CROCODILE."

After considerable trouble Abbudi recovered his spear from the river bed, but found that the soft blade had been bent almost to a right angle by the crocodile when he grabbed it out of his hand, as is clearly shown in the photograph.

The natives, with their usual happy knack for names, called this place "*Kampi ya Mamba*".

(Crocodile Camp), and always referred to it thus afterwards.

We were visited at this spot by some of the natives of the Meru country carrying foodstuffs for barter among the Samburu people. They sell beans, tobacco and a kind of flour, in return for the

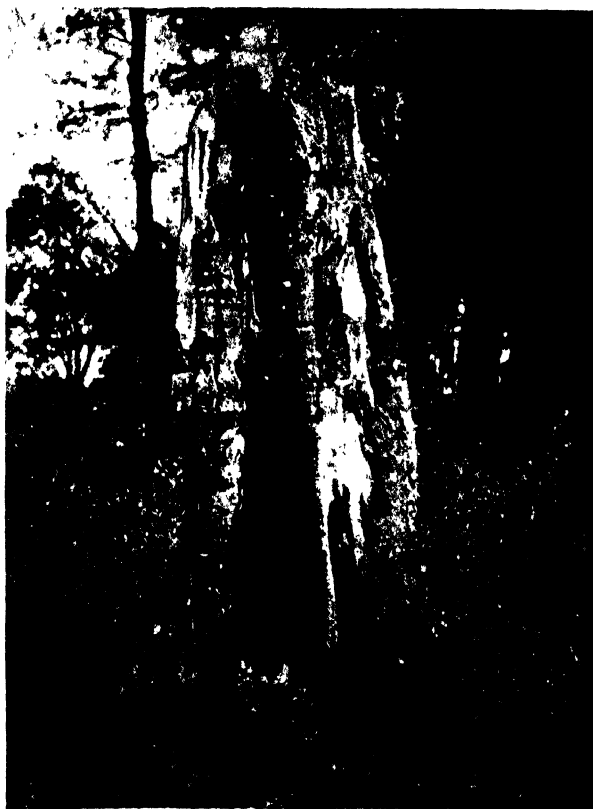


"AN INGENIOUS DEVICE MADE BY SOME WANDORORO."

skins of bullocks, sheep, and more especially goats, which no doubt eventually find their way into the hands of an Arab or Swahili trader of the coast, and thence to the markets of Europe. We did not do any trade with them, however, as they wanted too much in exchange for their goods,

and I did not wish to spoil the market for others who might follow.

Close to Crocodile Camp we came upon an ingenious device made by some Wandorobo for



"GIVING HIMSELF ROOM TO STAND UPRIGHT INSIDE."

the purpose of lying in wait for and attacking game in safety. A large tree grew by the side of a well-worn animal track, a few yards away from a waterhole which was apparently much used by

the game. The top of this tree had probably been broken off in a storm, leaving about ten feet of the bole intact. The Andorobo set to work on this with his little axe of primitive shape and make, hewed out a narrow doorway, and then hollowed out the rotten stem, thus giving himself room to stand upright inside and freely use his spear on a passing animal. The back part of the tree was cut away to within some four feet of the ground, leaving a flat platform by means of which the hunter could if necessary retreat from his position inside the hollow. The opening thus made also allowed his spear full play when poised horizontally for a thrust. If the wind was in the wrong direction the Andorobo remained concealed on the other side of the path until the beast had gone down the steep gully to drink, and then stepped cautiously forward to thrust his spear deep into a vital part. If it were a dangerous animal he merely skipped into his shelter, and if attacked there he scrambled on to the ledge at the back, where he would be safe from anything except an elephant or beast of prey; but the Wandorobo only hunt for meat, and would not molest a lion if he came to drink. Altogether it was a very ingenious contrivance, as will be seen from the photographs.

We did not come across many natives on our



way along the Guaso Nyiro, as the country is but sparsely inhabited. One day, however, I saw a whole Samburu village on *safari*, seeking fresh pastures. The men strode loftily along in a lordly manner carrying their spears and shields, or bows and arrows as the case might be, while the poor



"AND THEN STEPPED CAUTIOUSLY FORWARD."

unfortunate women were laden up with all kinds of household goods, including the framework of the huts themselves, which the overladen donkeys they drove could not bear the weight of. The boys and the old men herded the cattle and sheep.

Game continued to be very plentiful, and my companions got some good shooting. Now and

again I went out in the afternoon when camp had been pitched and everything set in order.

I made various attempts to stalk a gerenuk, but failed time after time, so much so that I was thoroughly exasperated with my bad fortune. They are very shy indeed, more especially the males, and I found it very difficult to get one. It appears that the Wandorobo hunt this gazelle with great zeal, as they prize its tender and delicious meat very highly. For this reason, probably, they were very timid and hard to approach. However, I was determined to get a specimen if possible, so spent several hot afternoons scrambling among the bushes studying their ways. I generally found that they travelled in a circle when attacked.

One day, when I was out alone, I came across a beauty, with what I should think were record horns, standing on his hind legs with his fore-feet resting against a tree trunk, and his long neck craned up to the branches, eating away contentedly at the tender leaves and green shoots. "Now is my chance," I said to myself; so, making my gun-bearer lie down, and telling him on no account to move, I began a long stalk. Soon after I started, a dip in the ground took me into cover, and then I dodged from bush to bush, and from tree to tree, gradually getting nearer to the still feeding gazelle.

No luck was in store for me, however, as I had

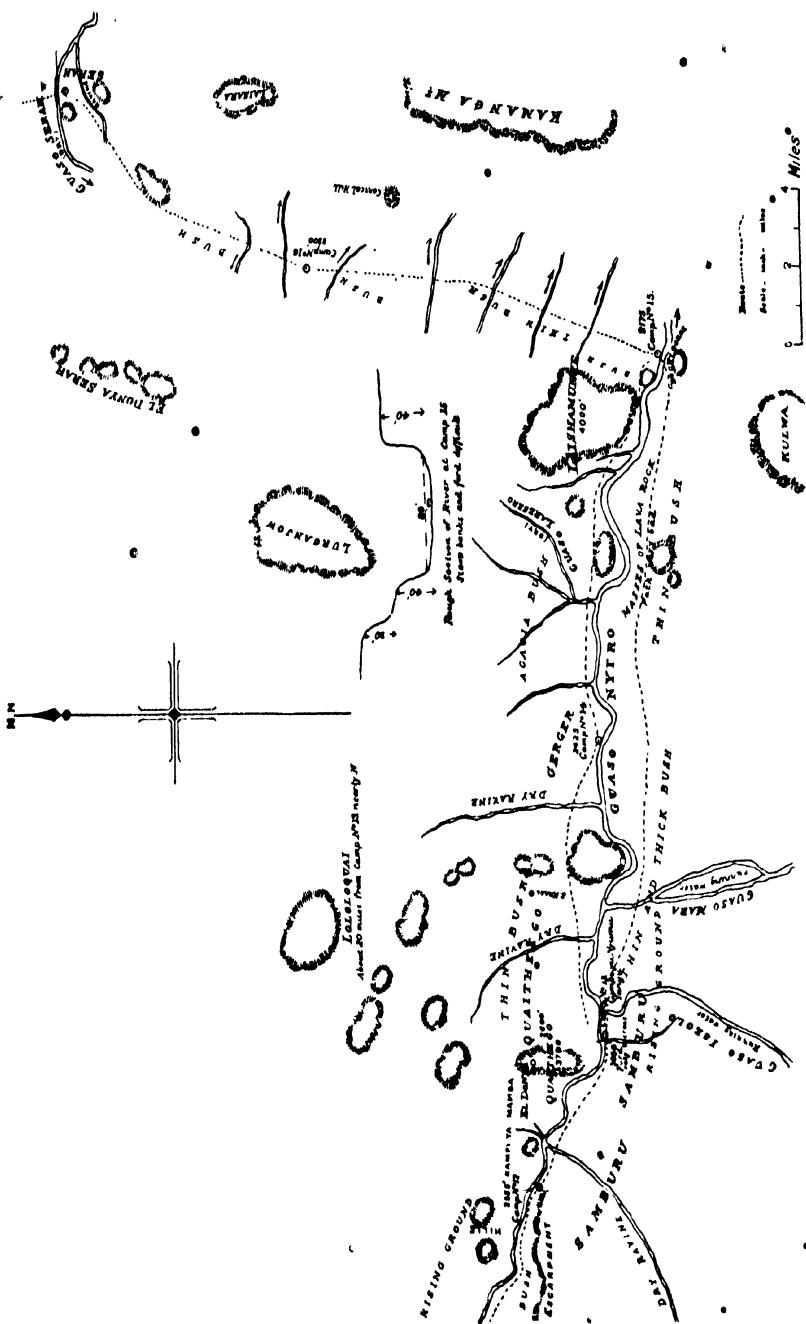
devoted too much attention to the buck I was intent on—a very common fault of mine—and consequently I did not notice that a little way to the right his wife and family were gazing at me intently and suspiciously. When they thought I had got quite near enough, off they started at a gallop, taking my intended trophy away with them!

Thus in one way or another I was foiled for a time in my attempts to obtain a specimen of these quaint-looking animals, but at last luck favoured me.

One morning, when we had set out soon after daylight, I was riding by myself a little to the right of the others and spied what I first of all took to be a Grant's gazelle, standing among the bushes. Had I only known what it was, I might have easily dismounted and shot him without more ado, as he stood motionless not more than forty yards away, looking in amazement at the wholly unusual sight of a man mounted on a horse. The moment he moved I saw by his long, slender neck and peculiar undulating motion that he was not a Grant, but a gerenuk with a very fine head indeed, so I immediately made up my mind to use every endeavour to bag him. I had a couple of unsuccessful snap-shots at him as he moved through the bushes, Aladdin spoiling my aim by pulling back on the reins just as I was about to fire. The

moment the gerenuk got out of sight I mounted and cantered after him as fast as the thorny nature of the bush and undergrowth would allow. In the meantime he had galloped across the front of my companions, and Mrs. B., not knowing that I was in pursuit, began to stalk him also, as he had now got into a bit of open country where he could be plainly seen. As soon as she caught sight of me she immediately stopped her stalk, and would not go on, although I offered to relinquish the hunt in her favour. I therefore continued the chase alone, and finally, after about an hour's hard work, got a fairly favourable shot at him as he stood in the midst of a herd of does beside some bushes. Although I heard the smack of the lead as it struck him, yet I was not at all sure that I had hit a vital spot, as the whole herd appeared to gallop away. On running up to the place where he had stood, I was delighted to find that he lay stretched out dead with a bullet through his heart.

The horns proved to be the longest on record of any gerenuk shot in the Protectorate, and I was naturally much pleased to be thus rewarded after so many disappointments--not because of the extra fraction which the horns measured, but because I had at last made a successful stalk and secured a good head.



## CHAPTER XIX

### THROUGH SAMBURU LAND

JOURNEYING quietly along in this manner we arrived at the *boma* of the late Mr. Neumann, who wrote such a very interesting book on elephant hunting in East Equatorial Africa. The natives all knew him as *Nyama Yangu*, a name they gave him owing to his habit of saying, whenever anybody pointed out an elephant or other animal, "*Nyama yangu*," which means "the beast is mine."

\* We camped close to his somewhat dilapidated hut under the shade of some dour palm, which are plentiful here. A few of the porters employed themselves in gathering the hard fruit of this tree and beating it into a kind of flour, which they then made into bread. I tried a piece of the loaf so made, but cannot say that I relished it very much, although the fruit itself has a rather pleasant flavour when reduced to powder.

At this place I was much grieved to lose my fine dog Lurcher. He brought on a bad attack of pneumonia by first getting over-heated while galloping and frisking about, and then going to lie down in the cold water of the river. We had become much attached to each other, and I was very sorry indeed when I saw that he was dying. I did everything I could for him, and wrapped him up warmly in my own blankets, but his end came very quickly after a few hours' illness. I buried him under a palm tree not far from my tent, and missed him for many a day afterwards.

As "*Kampi ya Nyama Yangu*," as the Samburu call Neumann's *boma*, is near the 38th degree of East Longitude, I determined to look in this neighbourhood for a suitable starting-point for the new eastern boundary to the Reserve, and therefore without delay went out exploring in the afternoon, so as to gather some idea of the more prominent physical features of the locality.

I noticed a mountain two or three miles away on the north side of the Guaso Nyiro which I thought might answer my purpose, as it made a good and unmistakable landmark. The natives also informed me that from the top of this I would be able to see a line of mountains stretching away northward to Marsabit.

Early the following morning, therefore, I engaged an intelligent native, who knew all the country round about, to come with me, and, taking every available man in the *safari* to build a stone beacon on the highest peak, I started off to climb this mountain, which is called Quaithego. It rises abruptly out of the plain, and is about 3,700 feet high. The eastern side seemed to present the easiest approach, but even here the ascent was a very steep and precipitous one, and we found it a rather difficult matter to climb up to the top.

When I reached the summit of this African Pisgah and turned my face towards Marsabit—that place which I had been told was a veritable land of promise—the sight that met my gaze filled me with disappointment; for here was no land flowing with milk and honey, but a barren, desolate region, extending as far as the eye could see, unrelieved by a single redeeming feature. Peak beyond peak of rugged and spectral mountains stretched away to the horizon, bare of aught save a veil of heat mist which shimmered round them from the hot and desert wastes of that terrible *nyika*.

It was not without anxiety, therefore, that I contemplated leading the *safari* through this inhospitable tract. I scanned the country carefully through my glasses in order to make myself as



familiar as possible with its principal features, and more especially to pick out such hills and mountains as I considered might be useful to me for the new boundary.

While engaged on this my eye was led from one peak to another, until finally it rested on a towering mountain, some 20 miles lower down on the north side of the Guaso Nyiro, which my guide told me was named Laishamunye.

After making a careful survey of the situation I came to the conclusion that this mountain would, on the whole, make a better base from which to start in quest of my boundary line, especially as I observed that the mountains and hills running northward appeared to be more in a direct line with it than with Quaithego. I was further confirmed in this view by hearing from my guide that there was a native track just to the east of it, which ran northwards to Marsabit. He told me, too, that there were waterholes here and there along the route, and that the names of the various landmarks were well known to the Samburu.

On coming to the conclusion to abandon Quaithego, I stopped the building of the huge stone beacon which I had set the *pagazis* to erect as a landmark. They were delighted to cease work, and with joyful shouts scrambled down the mountain side towards camp, as they have a very

strong objection to doing anything outside the ordinary *safari* routine.

I remained alone on Quaithego for some little time, sketching in the Guaso Nyiro and surrounding features of interest, and then made my way down the mountain on the western side, hoping that I should find it not so steep; but in this I was disappointed, as the going was even worse than I had experienced in the morning.

As I had been told before leaving Nairobi that the whole country between the Guaso Nyiro and Marsabit was waterless, or practically so, I was rather apprehensive of leading the *safari* into this unknown *nyika* where they might perish of thirst, so I had many an anxious consultation with my guides as to the whereabouts of the waterholes. Papai assured me that he would be able to lead me safely through the wilderness, and that the only places where there would be any difficulty would be from the Guaso Nyiro to a place called Serah, and again later on when we should have to cross the Kaisoot Desert, and for both of these tracts camels would be required.

I sent therefore for the local chief who lived at a village some three miles away from our camp at Nyama Yangu, so that I might ask him if he would supply me with camels for the journey to Serah, as I knew he possessed a number of these animals.

The old chief, whose name was Legurchalan, came down with a goodly following and we had a *shauri* (consultation) under the shadow of the large Union Jack which I carried with me. The *shauri* proved to be a long one, as is always the case when anything in the nature of a bargain has to be struck



"A SHAURI UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE LARGE UNION JACK."

with a native of Africa. Eventually, after drinking much coffee, he arranged that I should have four camels in return for a certain amount of cloth and wire, which I handed over to him in payment.

When the *shauri* was over, Legurchalan came and sat at my tent door, and in reply to my

questions gave me a considerable amount of useful information about his country and people. He was full of curiosity as to why I had come into the district, where I was going, what I intended to do, &c. He seemed very much impressed with the Union Jack, and appeared to understand in a vague kind of way that this flag represented considerable power. I found him most friendly and entertaining, and, on the whole, I was very favourably impressed with all the people I met belonging to his tribe.

The Samburu are a nation of nomads, the more wealthy among them possessing herds of camels, which are invaluable to them in their wanderings through the waterless *nyika*. They are supposed to be a branch of the Masai, and speak the same language, though they clip their syllables in a short crisp way, quite different from the drawn-out Masai intonation. Their peculiar habits and customs resemble in a large measure those of their brethren the Masai, although, unlike the latter, the warriors do not live in a separate *manyatta* from that of the elders. They daub themselves freely with grease and red clay, and the men braid their hair into a broad flat plait which is copiously plastered over with a reddish oily ochre, and hangs stiffly down between their shoulders, tied up with bands of sinewy tree-bark. Should a warrior find his own locks insufficient he does not hesitate to weave

in some false hair so as to give his plait the requisite fashionable shape. The hair worn in this fashion is called *El Daigan*, or the tail; and it is rather interesting to note that a range of mountains, running to the north-west from Kenya, is called El Daigan because it appears to come like a tail from Mount Kenya, which forms the head.



"HE DOES NOT HESITATE TO WEAVE IN SOME FALSE HAIR."

Before leaving *Kampi ya Nyama Yangu* I sent out a number of men to gather a quantity of the fibre plant (*sansevieria*), which grows abundantly in the neighbourhood. I was rather short of rope, of which a great deal is always required on *safari*, so I set the porters to work and soon added several hundred feet of most excellent stuff to my stock,

The manufacture is quite simple. First of all the plant is cut down and brought to camp, where it is beaten with a club against the trunk of a tree until the fibres are separated; these are then plaited into rope by one or two of the porters, many of whom are experts at this kind of work, as it is a usual task at the native jails.

As soon as the camels arrived from Legurchalan, we struck camp and set out along the Guaso Nyiro towards Laishamunye. One of these camels belonged to a young warrior named Lalla Rookh, who had the face and figure of a beautifully-modelled bronze statue. Indeed, he was so remarkably handsome that one might easily imagine him to be a direct descendant of Moore's lovely eastern princess.

Soon after leaving camp we came upon two streams. The first is called the Guaso Iscolo, and has its source in Mount Kenya, while the second, which we crossed some three miles further on, is called the Guaso Mara, and rises in the Jombini range in the Meru country, to the north east of Kenya.

After this I could find of no river flowing into the Guaso Nyiro until it reaches the Lorian Swamp, which is a huge expanse in which the river loses itself. I was told by a native, however, that the river does not end there, as most people have supposed, but in the wet season flows through

the Lorian Swamp and eventually makes its way eastward until it joins the Juba River not far from Kismayu, which is a couple of hundred miles north of Mombasa.

We camped at a place called Gerger, and after our mid-day meal, saw close outside the camp, and lumbering along in our direction, a huge old rhino. We were all three most interested in him, and set out to have a look at him more closely, thinking we were perfectly safe, as the wind was blowing from him towards us. We had no intention of molesting him in any way, but hoped we might be so lucky as to get near enough to take his photograph.

His intentions, however, were not so peaceful, for unfortunately when we got to within about 60 yards of him the wind suddenly veered round and revealed our presence to the great brute, instantly arousing his fury. Up went head and tail, and he twisted round with the agility of a cat to face us, at the same moment giving a loud snort.

Seeing this I called out to Mrs. B., "You had better fire, as he is coming for us." While he still swayed from side to side, her shot rang out and the bullet from her .450 struck him in the shoulder and brought him to his knees, with his nose on the ground, his hind quarters still remaining upright. Another bullet from the second barrel again

plumped into his shoulder within a couple of inches of the first, and over he rolled stone dead.

What might have been a very unpleasant experience was thus happily averted, and Mrs. B. was highly delighted with her success in bringing down the great beast and having a much prized



"DELIGHTED WITH HER SUCCESS IN BRINGING DOWN THE GREAT BEAST."

rhino amongst her trophies—the only one she secured throughout the expedition. The men cut up and carried off the meat to camp, and we made soup of his tail, which, after three days' stewing, proved excellent.

- The next morning, as we continued on our journey, we saw great herds of oryx and Grévy



zebra. They were so little alarmed at our approach that we rode to within some fifty yards of them and took several snap-shots. Their confidence in us was justified, as we did not molest them in any way. During the latter part of the march and while we were making our way over some very rough and scrub-covered country, great amusement was created in the *safari* by a member of it running behind Mrs. B. to take refuge from a rhino which suddenly appeared out of the bush. Fortunately no damage was done, and the beast bolted away again from the shouting porters and disappeared into the scrub with great activity.

Eventually we reached Laishamunye, which proved to be an intensely hot and most dreary and inhospitable place, with great sun-blistered boulders flung about everywhere. Even the river itself is gripped and throttled by vast masses of volcanic rock until it is merely a ribbon of water running through a melancholy gorge, shrouded by a few desolate and depressing dour palms which droop listlessly as if mourning that they were chained for life to this dismal spot.

The mountain of Laishamunye, which silently overshadows all, is a barren upheaval of rock, some two thousand feet from base to summit, and roughly 12 square miles in area. It is tipped on its southern crest with pinnacles, on the summit of which most

\*

mélancholy-looking vultures look down on the lifeless scene.

Unfortunately during our journey along the Guaso Nyiro B.'s health had not improved, and I now found myself placed in a very awkward and unpleasant predicament. I did not wish my companions to come any further with me on my journey; yet on account of B.'s state of health I could not possibly leave him behind in a strange country, without a doctor and with no knowledge of the natives or of the language. We were now absolutely in the grip of the *nyika*, so all things considered, I decided that it was best that we should travel on together as far as Marsabit, where I hoped he would quickly recover in the cool highlands.

After dusk I was sitting in my camp chair thinking over all these things. The rising moon shed a faint light and made our tent and camp look very weird amidst its desolate surroundings, when suddenly I was startled by the ping of a bullet as it sped past my ear, and the report of a rifle which instantly followed. Shouting out "Who fired?" I sprang to my feet and, rushing in the direction of the sound, discovered my rascally gun-bearer with a rifle in his hand. I instantly seized and disarmed him, and demanded an explanation as to why he wanted to shoot me. He trembled all over and said that it was an accident, as the cartridge had

slipped into the rifle without his knowledge, but when I asked him why he had pointed it in my direction and pulled the trigger, he could give no satisfactory reply.

As carelessness or rascality of this kind is a very serious matter and could not be allowed to go unpunished, I told him that he must be severely dealt with, and ordered the Headman to give him a good thrashing, which, of course, was a great indignity for a gun-bearer. He was a cowardly rascal, and I had often been obliged to admonish him for skulking in the rear or for running up a tree with the rifle when danger threatened—indeed, I had had to do so on that very morning. He now howled vigorously under his punishment, but it had a good effect upon him. I deprived him for some days of all weapons, and never afterwards throughout the journey did I allow him to follow me, but always made him go on just ahead, so that I could keep an eye on him, as I never knew what villainy he might be up to. He improved considerably under strict discipline, and was quite a different man by the time we reached Nairobi.

I had several rascals of this kind in the *safari* who needed close supervision and prompt punishment when they did wrong. Otherwise they would have become utterly unmanageable and mutinous in the wilds.

## CHAPTER XX

### IN QUEST OF THE BOUNDARY

FROM the information given to me by the guides, I understood that on leaving Laishamunye we should have to do a forced march of some thirty miles before the water holes at Serah could be reached. I determined, therefore, to start late in the afternoon, when men and beasts had had their food and water, and the fierce heat of the sun had somewhat abated.

After having seen that every available vessel was filled with water, we turned away from the Guaso Nyiro and set out northward towards Marsabit.

The moment we got away from the river we entered upon a dreary region covered for the most part with stunted leafless trees and thorn scrub, intersected here and there by dry gravelly ravines. The reddish sandy soil gave an added appearance of sun-stricken desolation to the surroundings, and the dust getting into our throats induced a burning

and intolerable thirst, even without the exertion of making our way through the tortuous animal paths which we were forced to pursue. Every stone has had inches blistered off its surface by the fierce heat of a pitiless sun, and even the living things that roam about in this barren wilderness appear parched and sun-dried—all save the giraffe, which seems to thrive in the glaring heat.

Rhinos are very numerous, and as I rode along to the left of the *safari* and about a mile away from it, so as better to observe the game, I was suddenly charged by one which had been startled by the passing caravan. Shouting to Abbudi and the gun-bearers who were with me to take refuge in a convenient tree, I galloped off thinking the brute would follow. He, however, turned his attention to the men in the tree instead, and remained for some time quite close to them, while Abbudi from his perch in the branches screamed insults at him in choice Masai. I sat on Aladdin some eighty yards away enjoying the sight. Finally, with a snort, the ungainly brute turned and trotted off swiftly with his tail in the air, and was soon lost to sight among the bushes.

Before we had traversed half a dozen miles I had counted eight of these creatures, but did not see a good head among the lot. Short horns seem

to be the distinctive peculiarity of the rhino of these regions.

My Samburu guide Papai walked beside me on this march and entertained me with much useful information, which he imparted to me through Abbudi. I now for the first time discovered that he had been born an Anderobo, and had spent all his youth in the pursuit of game, as is the custom of the men of that tribe. Sometimes, when he found it almost impossible to make a living by the chase, he attached himself to the Samburu or to the Rendile. One day he fortunately killed two fine elephants, and thus secured enough ivory to purchase a Samburu maiden for a wife; in this manner he finally settled down with his adopted tribe, and had now, as he said, become a real Samburu. He told me many stirring tales of adventurous encounters with elephants and other big game, and described to me a method frequently adopted among the Wandorobo to strike down a dangerous beast. A heavy block of wood, thicker at one end than the other, is hewn out of a hardwood tree, and into the heavier end of this is driven an iron spike smeared over with a deadly poison. A long thin rope made of fibre is tied through a hole made in the other end of the block, which is then suspended spear downward from a convenient branch over the centre of an

animal track. The spare part of the rope is carried along the branch and down the trunk, and run through a loop fastened to the foot of the tree. The end is then stretched across the path a few inches from the ground and fastened to a peg or stump some yards away. The rope at the place where it crosses the path is almost cut through, so that a small pressure will break it. When the animal comes along and strikes the rope with its foot, it breaks instantly at the spot where it is cut half-way through. The block then falls with great force, the iron spike burying itself in the beast's spine. The hunter follows up the wounded animal, which soon succumbs to its injuries and the poison.<sup>1</sup> The Wandorobo immediately cuts out the flesh round the wound, as to eat that part would mean death for them too, but the poison does not seem to have any ill effect on the remainder of the carcase.

As we marched along evening closed in, so a halt was called for tea and also to enable the *safari* to close up, as by this time the donkeys were far to the rear. When all had arrived the moon was shedding a brilliant light, so we set off again and marched until 9 p.m., when we slept in a rude shelter, the night being so fine that there was no need to pitch tents. We were off again before dawn, and at about 10 a.m. sighted the graceful palms that

<sup>1</sup> This contrivance is called an *ingerengett*.

abound along the bed of the Serah river. It was with no little anxiety that I rode up to the waterhole in the river bed, fearing that it might possibly be dry. I was much relieved to find an abundant supply, which welled up from a clear spring and flowed for a distance of about fifty yards along the gleaming sand before the latter engulfed it in its thirsty embrace.

Near this spot I noticed great numbers of oryx and Grévy zebra, also some giraffe and a rhino or two. I saw one zebra with its hind quarters badly lacerated by the claws of a lion. The wounds were quite fresh, and, as the poor brute was evidently in great pain, I shot it to put it out of its misery. Wounded animals in the wilds must often suffer a long drawn-out agony before the final end comes.

As game was plentiful at Serah, and there was only one waterhole for the animals to drink from, I thought to myself that this would be an excellent place to make observations by night. I therefore had a *boma* made close by the spring so that I might sit and watch the various beasts in the brilliant moonshine as they came to quench their thirst. I had the camp purposely pitched over half a mile away, in order that the animals should not be kept from the water or be disturbed during the night.

• After dinner I took up my position in the *boma*,



in which I had had many loopholes made, not for the purpose of shooting from, but to serve as peep-holes, so that I might be able to see in all directions; and I was well rewarded for the trouble I had taken.

I had not been in my stockade for more than an hour, when in the distance I heard pad, pad, pad, pad, and a few seconds afterwards up stalked a very tall giraffe, followed by twelve others, their heads being apparently on a level with the tops of the palms. It was the weirdest thing imaginable to watch these huge ungainly creatures stride past within twenty yards, all the time twisting their heads from side to side, keenly on the look-out, and yet totally unconscious of my presence. When they had had their drink at the waterhole, they stalked off again, and later on were succeeded by others at various times throughout the night. None of them went down to the water direct, but circled round it first to see if there were an enemy, in the shape of a lion or other rapacious beast, in sight. One elephant came and had a long drink and a bath, and then leisurely went his way down the bed of the river.

It was a perfectly still night, without a breath of air blowing, which probably accounts for the fact that the animals did not wind my *boma*.

Soon after the first troop of giraffe had gone, a

band of about twenty oryx came to within thirty yards or so of the water, and there halted and stood gazing at it. Then, evidently at the command of a leader, all rushed impetuously down into the river-bed, drank greedily, and galloped back to their former position. After a pause there, they again charged down together, drank their fill and galloped off into the night, this time returning no more. Undoubtedly they adopted these tactics owing to their fear of lions lurking in ambush about the waterhole. It is probable that no beast of prey would attack a herd of this size if they meant to stand by one another, as the oryx, with its long, sharp, and strong horns, set on a powerful head, is by no means to be despised as an antagonist, even by a lion. It would be very interesting to know if they would have made common cause against one had he appeared.

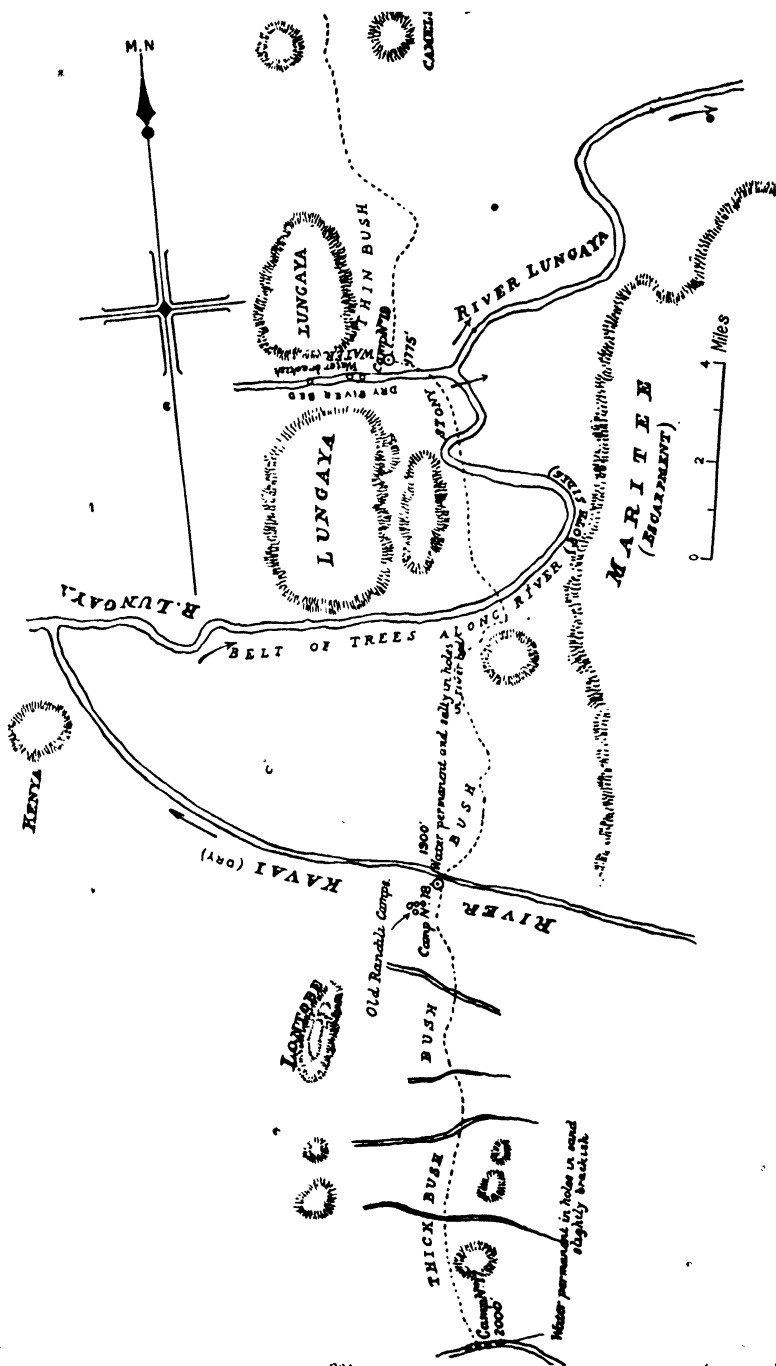
An hour or so after this scores of zebra came to drink, and then, to add to the interest, a lion at last arrived on the scene, and began to prowl stealthily round. I thought he was coming straight up to my *boma*, so much so that I reached out for my rifle and went to the loophole which he seemed to be approaching. I watched carefully for him, but for some reason he must have doubled back and crouched under a clump of bushes which grew on the bank by the water. I did not actually see

him go into these bushes, but felt pretty sure that he had hidden himself there. He gave absolutely no sign of his presence, however, and I began to think that he must have gone away along some fold in the ground where I could not see him. I soon found that this was not so, for just then some zebra came along, and as they passed close by, the lion made a mighty spring out of the bushes, pounced on one, dashed it to the earth, and apparently instantly killed it, as it hardly moved again. He lost no time in dragging it to the bank on the other side of the river bed and over some rocks out of my sight. Here he was joined by several other lions, and the noise they made over their feast was appalling. They all disappeared before daylight, and there was very little left of the zebra when I went out to investigate.

As the night wore on rhino after rhino came walking towards the water with the gravest unconcern, every species in the neighbourhood making way for him except his own kind. Finally, towards dawn, the whole place abounded with hyænas. I counted eight all present at one time, and one of these, more inquisitive than the rest, came sniffing round my *boma* to see what was there, and so paid for his curiosity with his life. He proved to be of a rather rare kind, the striped hyæna.

A night such as this spent among the animals

in the wilds, watching their habits and methods both of aggression and self-defence, compensates the lover of wild life for the trials and hardships endured on many a toilsome march in this hot and thirsty land.



## CHAPTER XXI

### A ROGUE ELEPHANT KILLS ALADDIN

NEXT day we continued our march towards Marsabit, but had to go rather slowly on account of B., who was feverish and had to be carried in a hammock, while Mrs. B. and I took it in turns, when it got very hot, to walk beside him with an umbrella to shade him from the fierce rays of the sun.

The path was bushy, but there were few thorn trees, which was a great comfort, for where these abound the unfortunate porters have a very bad time, as they keep catching in the loads as the men walk along. Once during this toilsome march we suddenly came upon a lion right in our path, about 100 yards ahead. He galloped off the moment he caught sight of us, and made for a bit of thicket away to our left. I put Aladdin after him at his top speed, but the lion made good his escape among the dense bush, from which, in spite of my best efforts, I was unable to cut him off.

This was a hard day for the donkeys on account of the rough nature of the ground, and it gave Munyakai a good deal of trouble to get them to camp, as it was his business to bring up the rear of the *safari* and clear all stragglers on before him. One of the donkeys finally gave out, and although his load was taken off, was unable to walk any further. The Headman, however, was not to be defeated, so sending on to me for half-a-dozen porters, he tied the donkey's legs together, put a pole between them, and hoisting him aloft on the men's shoulders, had him borne in triumph to camp. It reminded me of the final stage of the fable of the old man and the ass.

We reached Kawai about midday, where we found some salty water in holes in the otherwise dry bed of the river from which this camping place takes its name. Game similar to that seen at Serah, with the addition of gerenuk, abounded.

From Kawai we marched on to a place called Lungaya, and on the way had a most exciting and tragic adventure. B. was feeling a little better and we were all riding together at the head of the *safari*, when suddenly, just after we had crossed over the dry bed of the Lungaya river, we saw a huge, solitary elephant stalk up out of the trees which grew very thick along its banks, and stand in a threatening attitude directly in our path.

some fifty yards away. As he was alone and looked very vicious, I at once concluded that this solitary rover was a "rogue," and therefore a dangerous beast, and I was further confirmed in my rogue theory by the fact that he had only one tusk. He had probably lost the other in a mighty encounter with a rival bull, who had defeated him and driven him out of the herd. As he showed every intention of charging us, we hastily dismounted and covered him with our rifles. Just as he began to make for us I called on Mrs. B. to fire first, so she let drive at him with her .450 rifle, which struck him heavily. We then all fired at the oncoming monster, on which he turned and, staggering off a short distance, fell heavily among some dense bushes, which completely hid him from our sight. I ran forward, hoping that I might be able to give him a finishing shot before he could rise and do any damage, but when I got to within ten yards of where he lay I found that I could not see him or get through the thick bushes among which he had fallen.

The others had by this time taken up their position on a high rock, from the top of which they could catch glimpses of his huge body. They shouted out to me to come back quickly, as the elephant was getting up. At the same instant I heard a terrific commotion going on among the .



bushes, so, without waiting to see what it was all about, I turned and made hasty strides for the shelter of the rock, having no desire to be trampled to pieces in that dense undergrowth, where there was little chance for me and every chance for the elephant.

From our position on the rock we saw the elephant trot off through the thick bush, apparently not much hurt. He was more or less concealed from our view, but he seemed to be making for the tail end of the *safari*, which was still some distance away.

I told Mrs. B. to remain at this spot, as it was a comparatively safe place on the edge of the thicket, with the high rock close by in case of need. I also ordered Abbudi to remain with her, and guard her from all danger until we returned.

B. and I then mounted our horses and rode back to protect the rest of the *safari* in case the brute should make an attack. We soon got among a thick belt of bush into which the elephant had disappeared, and here we dismounted and advanced cautiously on foot, leaving the horses with the syces. The Headman, who was coming along with some of the donkeys, shouted out to us that the brute had just passed him and he was afraid it was going to attack another batch of men and donkeys which were following close behind. We therefore pushed.

on as rapidly as possible in the track plainly taken by the wounded beast. All at once, just as we were in the midst of a very dense bit of thicket, the elephant loomed up close to our front and with outspread ears charged straight at B., who was a couple of paces away on my right. As he came on he viciously flapped his enormous ears back to his sides, and just as he did this I fired full at his head where it joins the trunk. Although this did not knock him down, it providentially caused him to swerve off a yard or two from B. in the direction of Abdi, the Somali gun-bearer, who now caught his eye. The terrified man made a dive for safety but got caught up in the thicket, and I fully expected to see him crushed to death before my eyes. I tore open the breech of my rifle with all the speed I could muster, wondering if I should have time to get another bullet into the brute before he was on the Somali. Just as his head got level with me, I rammed the cartridge home, threw the rifle to my shoulder and in doing so almost touched his towering flank as he raced past in pursuit of the gun-bearer. At the moment that he reached out his trunk to dash Abdi to the ground I let him have a slanting shot, which so upset him that he merely knocked off the man's puggari and crashed away into the bush without doing us any damage. Hardly waiting for the jungle to close on him I gave

chase, for I feared that the infuriated animal might come up with the *safari* again and kill somebody. As I rushed after him I called loudly to the gun-bearers to follow me, but they apparently had had such a terrible fright that not one of them ventured out of his hiding-place, so I continued the hunt alone, expecting to be joined by them every moment. None of them turned up, however, and I had the greatest difficulty in following the trail, as the ground was very dry and hard, and I had to depend entirely upon finding a drop of blood here and there on the leaves and branches against which the elephant brushed as he forced his way along. He made a tremendous round, and for a full hour I tracked him in this way slowly and painfully through the thick jungle, never knowing the moment when I might suddenly come upon him unawares.

At last the trail led me to the line of the *safari* again, and my fears lest he should attack some of the men in his infuriated temper seemed justified. In confirmation of this I was met just then by a small party of porters, headed by a couple of *askaris*, who were coming out to look for my dead body, for the gun-bearers, instead of following me as they ought to have done, had returned to the *safari* and reported me crushed to death by the elephant. The moment I came into view they ran to me, and

gave me the appalling news that the elephant had charged the caravan a little further on, and had killed Mrs. B. and also my horse and syce!

The state of consternation and horror into which this news threw me can well be imagined. Without waiting for further details, I rushed on to find out if this terrible calamity could really have taken place. A short distance further on I met B., who had returned to look after his wife while I took up the spoor. I inquired anxiously as to what had occurred, and he considerably relieved my feelings by telling me that the worst part of the catastrophe had not happened, as Mrs. B. was safe, although she had had an exceedingly narrow and lucky escape. He said, however, that it was unfortunately true that my horse had been killed and the syce injured. This bit of news was bad enough, but it might have been infinitely worse. We then set out to the spot where poor Aladdin had fallen. On the way we met Mrs. B., who was much astonished to see me, as she had been told that I was dead. From her I heard a full account of the disaster. It appears that she remained for some time at the spot where we had left her, but after a while she became anxious and wanted to find out what was going on, so started out on foot through the jungle, taking Abbudi with her. On the way she came upon my syce and Aladdin, and told Asa Ram to follow on

with the horse and ponies. Just as they got to the very thickest part of the jungle, where it was practically impossible to move except at a snail's pace, out charged the elephant from the bushes not ten yards away! As she had no rifle with her, she



"MY INDIAN SYCE, ASA RAM."

thought the best thing to do was to crouch down on the spot where she stood, hoping that the brute would not see her. My Indian syce, Asa Ram, stood close by, paralysed with fear, holding Aladdin tightly by the reins as if rooted to the ground. The infuriated brute caught sight of my beautiful white Arab, and instantly made a lunge, knocked down the syce, who lay as one dead at his feet, and drove his tusk deep into poor Aladdin's side.

At this moment, when the elephant was on the look-out for fresh victims, Jerogi, the Kikuyu syce, let the other ponies loose, and both he and they bolted off as fast as possible into the bush, while

Abbudi, remembering the emphatic instructions that I had given him to guard Mrs. B., suddenly seized her by the wrist, and wriggled off with her through the undergrowth to a place of safety. Well done, Abbudi. I salute you : *Sobai !*

Aladdin appears to have been unable to get



"I SAW POOR ALADDIN LYING THERE LIFELESS BEFORE ME."

free of the syce until after the elephant had driven his tusk into him, but the moment he felt the thrust he dashed madly forward for some distance, leaving a stream of blood in his trail. In a very short time his strength began to fail, then he tottered in his stride, and eventually fell heavily on his side, stone dead.

Thus by his untimely end Aladdin more than justified the extraordinary nervous dread which he had always shown when passing a bush or going through a thicket. His instinct, no doubt, told him of the manifold dangers which lurked there for his undoing on some unlucky day. .

When we reached the open glade where poor Aladdin had fallen, and I saw him lying there lifeless before me, I realised to the full that I had lost not only a faithful steed, but a dumb friend who had taken part with me in many an exciting chase.

Determined to avenge his death, I started off again as soon as possible on the trail of the vicious "rogue" that had caused us so much anxiety and sorrow. We all joined in the chase, but I did not find the gun-bearers very keen on the hunt, as the brute had given them a bad fright.

Before leaving Aladdin I had noticed, on un-girthing the saddle, that a stirrup-leather was missing from the side on which the elephant had gored him, so, thinking that it was probably lying on the ground at the spot where Aladdin was charged, I sent the syce, Asa Ram, and an *askari* to look for it. As they did not return we walked ourselves in the direction they had taken, and, on rounding a bit of thick jungle, discovered the pair calmly sitting safe in the shelter of a big tree!

They had evidently determined to wait here until sufficient time had elapsed, and then to return and tell me that the stirrup-leather could not be found. The moment they saw us they made a wild bolt for cover, but I shouted to them to come back, as they were discovered.

I could not, however, find it in my heart to blame them very much for not wishing to venture anywhere near the elephant again, as for all we knew he might still be in the vicinity, and it was only half an hour since Asa Ram had had such a very narrow escape.

We all now took up the elephant's spoor and scouted cautiously through the thick bush into which he had disappeared, finding it extremely difficult to keep on his track. He doubled and twisted through the jungle in the most perplexing manner, probably not knowing where he was going. Eventually, however, Abbudi came running up in great excitement and told us that he had seen the elephant standing up in a path close by, facing us as if he were about to charge again.

I at once ordered everybody to keep well out of the way, as I did not wish any further tragedies, and taking the .450 rifle I set off in the direction Abbudi pointed out. I considered that if I went alone, I would have a better chance of getting



in a fatal shot than if others were present about whose safety I felt anxious. I was quite anxious enough about my own as I stalked stealthily and carefully against the wind, using the utmost care in getting through the tangled jungle so as not to make too much noise. At last, as I peeped cautiously through the green leaves of a great tree whose branches hung to the ground, I saw the huge beast confronting me not fifteen yards ahead. The sight of him brought me to a rigid halt, and peering more intently I saw that he was not standing but lying down at full length on his side. He was not dead, however, as his flanks were gently heaving up and down—at least I thought this was the case—so I put two more shots into him to end his career and prevent him from doing any further damage. Seeing then that he did not move I went up to him and found that what I had taken to be the heaving flanks was merely the moving shadow of some branches swayed by the wind above his body. I now gave a loud halloo and called to my companions to come up, as he was stone dead. They very soon arrived at the spot, and as it was Mrs. B.'s elephant she was placed in triumph on his back and photographed.

I knew, of course, that one of the tusks was broken

off short, but on getting out the other we discovered that it was absolutely decayed away and in a putrid mass for over eighteen inches inside the skull. This must have given him frightful agony, and was no



"SHE WAS PLACED IN TRIUMPH ON HIS BACK."

doubt the reason why he was so fierce and attacked us so unprovokedly in the early morning.

We also had two of the feet cleaned out, which is by no means an easy matter, but as the natives like the sinewy flesh there was some competition for this task. We lost the feet later on, as will be seen in another chapter.

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It was very lucky that this whole adventure did not end more disastrously. Indeed, I was very thankful that we got off so lightly, as the vicious brute only missed killing B. and Mrs. B. by a fluke, while the syce and the Somali gun-bearer had also



"THERE WAS SOME COMPETITION FOR THIS TASK."

very narrow escapes. Fortunately Asa Ram was not injured, although the elephant had actually stood over him when it knocked him down. His nerves were quite shattered and for hours afterwards his eyes almost stood out of his head and had a startled, half-frenzied look in them which showed plainly that he had had a terrible fright.

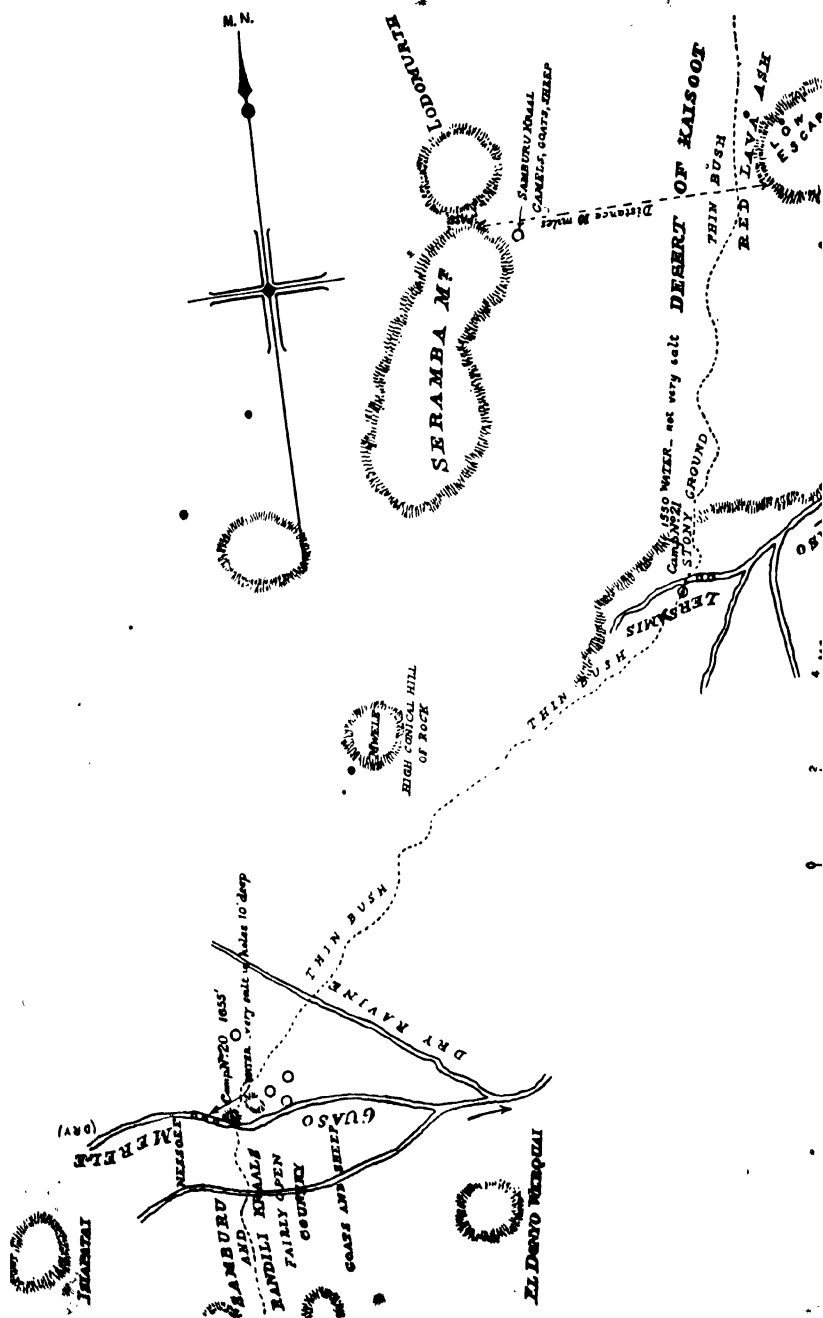
## CHAPTER XXII

### A RHINO CONCERT

WE retired early that night, for we were all quite tired out after the trials and adventures of the day. We were not permitted a peaceful repose, however, as soon after midnight two or three rhino came close to the camp, causing the men to make an uproar, and the *askaris* on duty added to the confusion by blazing away at the unwelcome intruders. I, of course, had to go out to inquire what was the matter, and was just in time to see two of our weird visitors disappearing into the gloom, evidently thoroughly scared at the unaccustomed din raised by the porters and *askaris* at their usually quiet rendezvous by the waterhole.

We remained another day at Lungaya, and I employed the time in making sketches and taking notes. I got my hands so badly blistered by the sun that I found it difficult for some time afterwards to use the pencil.

On returning to camp I found that B., who on the



previous day had been much better, was rather ill again; so I sat up late that night helping to nurse and attend to him.

About midnight, just after I had gone to my tent I heard a terrific din coming from the direction of the waterhole which was some two hundred yards



"A ROCKY RIDGE WHICH FORMED A BACKGROUND TO OUR BOMA."

away at the back of our encampment, behind a rocky ridge which formed a background to our *boma*. I thought it would be most interesting to go and see what all the disturbance was about, so taking an *askari* with me I set out and carefully stalked over the ridge and on towards the spot from whence the uproar was coming. I expected to find

a herd of elephants fighting for possession of the waterhole, as the shrill and weird cries which resounded from the rocks gave me the impression that these animals were trumpeting there.

Just as we got over the rocky ridge, a lion bounded out of the path almost at our feet, but he was evidently not hungry, so did not attempt to attack us, and was soon out of sight among the bushes. The *askari* got rather a fright and cried out "*Rudi, Bwana, rudi! Hapa mbaya sana*" ("Return, master, return! This is a very bad place").

I had not the least intention of going back, however, as I was determined to see what was making the uproar which still continued at the waterhole. By this time it sounded as if there could not be less than a score of elephants trumpeting there in concert. We stalked on carefully and cautiously among the rocks with the wind in our favour, until at last we were able to look over the edge of a crag down into the ravine at our feet. Then the weirdest sight that I could ever wish to see suddenly unfolded itself beneath my astonished gaze. No fewer than sixteen rhinos were gathered together close by, all roaring at each other and struggling and fighting in their efforts to get at the waterhole. The moon was shedding a brilliant lustre all round, and everything was peaceful except at this one spot.

where pandemonium reigned. I stood perfectly fascinated, and from the rock where I took up my position watched the ungainly brutes with the deepest interest for a couple of hours. I was not more than ten yards from the nearest of them, and those farthest away were not thirty yards off, but they were so busily occupied with their own affairs that they remained quite unconscious of my proximity.

I could easily have picked off half a dozen of them with my rifle, and some of them had very fine horns, but, of course, I had no intention whatever of molesting them. They were much more interesting alive than dead, and I never for a moment entertained the thought of disturbing their concert by firing my rifle.

Two of them especially amused me very much. One, who was evidently a bully, took up his position stolidly at the waterhole and would not budge an inch. Then a second came and stood opposite to him and proceeded to give him a piece of his mind. The bully, of course, answered back and there they both stood for quite a long time, with their mouths wide open, roaring bad rhino language at each other for all they were worth! The others, who were waiting for their turn to have a drink, joined in the discordant chorus from time to time.

I noticed four mothers among them with their



little calves sheltering closely to them amidst all the noise and uproar, and no doubt wondering what it was all about. Presently one of these mothers with her baby left the brawling crowd and stalked off sedately and leisurely. She passed practically at my feet and then turned to the left and mounting the rocks crossed the path by which I had reached my perch. She disappeared into the gloom without becoming aware of my presence. Soon afterwards another went solemnly off, and gradually, one by one, having satisfied their thirst, they all disappeared in different directions, while I made my way back to my tent, after having witnessed one of the most extraordinary and interesting sights it has ever been my good fortune to behold.

I had given orders that an early start was to be made, for Papai had told me that our next march would be a long and trying one. It was with a very ill grace, therefore, that I received my boy when he came, long before dawn, to tell me that the camp was astir and preparing for the road.

I was, however, most anxious to reach Marsabit as quickly as possible, so we left Lungaya at about 4.30 and continued our march northward.

Before midday we reached a place called Nayssoe, where we found an encampment of Rendile. This was the first time I had come across any of the people belonging to this tribe, although we

had already passed one or two of their empty *bomas* on our way. In outward appearance they are not unlike the Samburu, who live in these parts. This is probably due to a mixture of the two races, as there is a considerable amount of intercourse between the two tribes herabouts at the frontiers of their respective districts. I noticed, however,



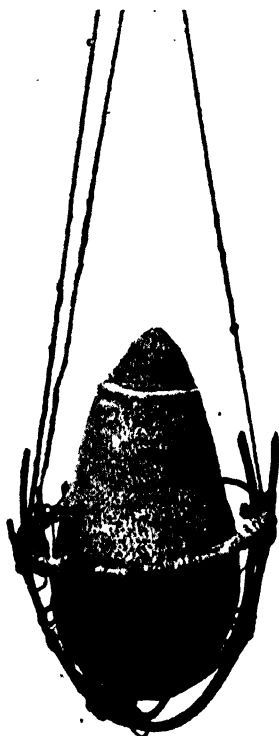
"I SAW HERE IMMENSE HERDS OF CAMEL."

that the Rendile were somewhat taller and more spare in figure, and had more prominent cheekbones, than either the Masai or the Samburu. Some of them had quite blue eyes, which is most unusual in an African. They are a nation of nomads, moving their families, their huts, and their flocks and herds to new pastures and fresh

springs whenever a change is considered desirable or necessary. All the Rendile whom I came across could speak both Somali and Masai very well, but they have a language of their own which somewhat resembles Somali.

In habits and customs, and in the method of building their huts and *bomas*, they follow the lead of the latter, and have but little in common with the customs of the Masai or Samburu. Unlike the Somalis however, who are Mohammedans, the Rendile appear to have no religion.

I saw here immense herds of camels, which these people breed principally for transport and food purposes. They consider the flesh of the camel a great delicacy, and drink quantities of camels' milk. Indeed, they brought me presents of huge jars filled with it, but we



"THESE JARS ARE MADE IN VARIOUS SIZES."

found it somewhat salty and odorous, so I promptly handed it over to the Headman for distribution among the *safari*, who thoroughly appreciated it.

The jars in which the milk was carried were beautifully woven out of some fibre plant, and were fitted with the most cunningly made lid of the same material, which is commonly used as a cup to drink from, the whole thing being quite watertight. These jars are made in various sizes, with a capacity of from about one to five gallons. About half a dozen of the largest can be packed on a camel. •

A great gathering of the elders and warriors now came round our camp to gaze at the white men and more especially at the white lady, who was ever a source of interest and wonderment to all the people of the wilds.

Among these visitors was a Samburu named Lukubirr, who had heard that I was going in the direction of Basso, as the natives call Lake Rudolf, and came to beg that he might be allowed to accompany me on his camel. He was most anxious to reach the Boran country in order to recover his long-lost son Bermingoo, who had been carried off by the Borani some twenty-five years previously, during a raid which they made on a Samburu village, where he was living at the time, on the shores of the lake. The poor old man seemed much distressed when I told him that his son, if

still alive, had probably taken unto himself a wife from among the Boran women, and was now as much a Boran as the Borani themselves, and that after such a very long time it would be hopeless to expect him to return to the Samburu nation.

The way the old man counted up the twenty-five years was very quaint. He first cut up a long stalk of grass into pieces which represented months; he then cut another stalk equal in length to the first, and changed it from hand to hand twenty-five times, which thus represented twenty-five years.

As I required some camels to carry water across the parched desert which lies between this place and Marsabit, I had again to go through the dearly-loved formula of a long *shauri* before I succeeded in striking a bargain for the hire of some dozen of these animals. I asked the old chief whether, if I happened to return this way, he would provide me with camels to take me back to the Guaso Nyiro, but he was not anxious to do this, as he said the journey would be through Samburu country and his people did not like to traverse it. He informed me, however, that as there were Samburu at Marsabit and great numbers of camels, I should have no difficulty in engaging as many as I wanted there, either to take me further on or bring me back to the Guaso Nyiro.

When this question of the camels had at last been

settled satisfactorily on both sides, I made some coffee for the local chief Lemerlene, who greatly appreciated it, and was especially pleased with the sugar with which it was sweetened. After he had gulped down the first few mouthfuls he rubbed his stomach comfortably and said he hoped I would make a lot more, as he could spend the rest of his life drinking stuff such as this. He then called up some of the men of his tribe and grudgingly gave them a sip out of his cup; he would not on any account trust it out of his hands.

The end of it was that I made a large potful of coffee and gave them some all round, which hugely delighted them and greatly cemented our friendship. Before taking leave, Lemerlene warned us to be on our guard against man-eating lions, as there was one lurking about in the neighbourhood that had taken a man out of a *manyatta* a few nights previously.

We soon found that the old chief's warning was well-timed, because soon after dark the man-eater appeared and made a dash at one of the donkey-boys, who, however, fortunately eluded him. The whole *safari* was on the alert, and made such an uproar that the lion got confused and cleared off, only to return a couple of hours later to stalk our own tents.

I had not yet gone to bed and was sitting outside

the tent in the moonlight with a rifle across my knees. Suddenly the *askari* on duty at the watch fire close by called out, "*Bwana, simba!*" ("Master, a lion!"). Looking in the direction in which he pointed, I plainly saw the beast stalking up to us, not fifty yards away. I raised my rifle and covered him with it, but did not pull the trigger, as he appeared to be coming closer and I thought by waiting a second or two longer he would give me a better opportunity of shooting him. Unfortunately, however, at this moment he caught sight of me, stepped behind a bush and made off like a streak of light, so I did not get another chance to fire.

We kept a strict watch all round the camp for the remainder of the night and luckily had no further visits from him.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE TRAGEDY IN THE DESERT

NEXT morning we obtained our camels, said goodbye to our friend Lemerlene, and continued on our way. The march was a rather trying one of some sixteen miles, but the monotony of the journey was broken now and again by a herd of giraffe crossing our path, or by a rhino or other interesting animal breaking away through the bush, startled by the unusual spectacle our caravan presented to its astonished gaze.

Away to our front and on our line of march we could see a solitary pinnacle of reddish rock, putting up into the heavens in solitary state. On asking Papai what it was called, he told me it was known as Mwele. It was with no little satisfaction that I passed up the shadow of this rocky landmark, as our camping-place for the night was but a short distance beyond it, and then but another long day's journey would bring us to that



much longed-for paradise in the wilds, Marsabit, where I hoped that B. would soon be himself again.

I was somewhat anxious about both my companions on this march, as B. was still feverish and had to be carried in a hammock for part of the way, while Mrs. B. was tired out by a couple of nights' watching at his bedside. I therefore looked forward with the greatest impatience to reaching the bracing air of Marsabit, as I knew that it would do both an immense amount of good. Many a time, when my movements were hampered by my companions, did I keenly regret that I had ever obtained permission for them to accompany me; but it is always easy to be wise after the event, and now upon finding myself in a difficult position, I adopted what I considered to be the best and most humane course of action, which was to push on to a cool climate with all speed.

We arrived at Lersamis soon after noon, and found it to be a dismal spot, in the midst of a desolation of thorny scrub and rocky barrenness, only rendered possible as a temporary encampment, even for the wandering Rendile, by a few brackish and evil-smelling waterholes in the otherwise dry bed of the river.

I feared that I should have Mrs. B. again on the sick-list if she did not get a good night's rest, so I

arranged that she should take possession of my tent at this place in order that she might have an undisturbed sleep, while I undertook to sit up with B. and look after him during the night.

Leaving my two companions to rest in camp I went out in the afternoon to explore and take notes of the game and country. On returning to our *boma* I was much worried to find that B. had, contrary to my wishes, gone out after a giraffe, which his gun-bearer had told him was feeding at no great distance. I knew that he was in no fit state to be out in the hot sun, so as soon as I heard of it I sent a message to him requesting his return to camp. Very soon after he got back he became seriously ill, and I feared he had got a touch of sun. We did everything we could for him and put him to bed as comfortably as possible. I sat up with him throughout the night, keeping wet bandages on his forehead and giving him a cooling drink whenever he required it. I then blessed the happy thought which had induced me to have canvas waterbags made, as when these are filled and hung up in the breeze, the water gets deliciously cold, and on being mixed with a little lime-juice forms a most grateful and refreshing drink.

Several times during the night, while B. seemed asleep and fairly comfortable, I went out and paid a visit to the *askaris* on sentry to see that they were

on the alert, as lions, on their way to the waterholes, were roaring in all directions round our camp. Sometimes, indeed, they gave a low sinister growl quite close at hand, so, as I did not want anyone to be carried off if such an accident could be avoided, I kept a good fire going and two sentries on the



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THE COOK'S TENT.

look-out. Once, while visiting the *askaris*, I caught a glimpse of one of these lions stalking through the bushes towards the tents; he saw me, however, and was off again before I had time to cover him with my rifle.

At about 4 a.m. B. seemed to be sleeping quietly and peacefully, so I went to the cook's tent and

rousing Paul, got him to make me a cup of cocoa, of which I was much in need. Immediately afterwards I returned and sat down in my camp chair, just outside the tent door, to take a little rest in the cool morning air, telling the *askari* on duty close by to be sure and wake me up in case he should hear B. call out. I very soon fell asleep and woke up again about 5.30. Hearing B. moving about in bed I spoke to him, and we talked for a few minutes about how he felt and the arrangements for the coming march. I then went to see the Headman, who was with the *safari* some forty or fifty yards away, to give him directions about a hammock for B. and orders for the journey.

In the middle of our conversation one of the boys named Edi came up to me and complained of being ill, and while I was prescribing for him, we were all suddenly startled to hear the sound of a shot coming from the direction of B.'s tent. I rushed off to see what was the matter, accompanied by the Headman and a dozen of the others. We all ran into the tent, and to our horror found B. lying back in bed with a bullet through his head and a revolver in his hand. It was a terrible shock, and one which I shall never forget while I live. He was quite unconscious when we entered, and all was over in a few moments.

I found out afterwards that he had instructed his

boy to put a loaded revolver under his pillow every night, and what possibly happened is that this may have slipped down under his shoulder, and when B. put out his hand to remove it, he may have pulled the trigger by accident and so shot himself. Had I known that he always kept a loaded revolver under his pillow I should most certainly have removed the weapon, as in my experience I have invariably found that a revolver is more dangerous to the owner than to anybody else.

Meanwhile Mrs. B. had rushed up with the others to know what had happened, but as I wished to spare her the awful shock, I asked her to return to my tent, and told her that I would come in a few minutes to explain matters to her.

As soon as possible I went to break the tragic news as gently as I could, telling her that B. had had a grave revolver accident, and that I hoped she would, with her usual pluck, try to bear up under the terrible blow with what fortitude she could command. She did not at first realise everything I meant to convey, and it was with difficulty that I made her understand that all was over. The blow was so sudden that she seemed quite dazed and unable to grasp the real situation. I therefore thought it was best to leave her alone, and came away, giving my boy careful instructions to look after her, and do all he could for her until I

returned from the burial, which would, of course, have to take place as soon as arrangements could be made.

When everything was ready, a mournful little procession, consisting of myself, the Headman, and some of the men in the *safari*, made its way out into the wilderness, where the sad interment took place. Over and round the grave we placed large stones, so that it should not be disturbed.

I then sent the men who had assisted me back to camp, while I remained for a little while by the graveside, thinking over the sad calamity which had so suddenly overtaken us.

I was much perplexed as to what I should now do, and I debated for some little time with myself as to whether I should return to Nairobi immediately, or go on to Marsabit, where I hoped to be able to complete the principal part of my work.

Of course if the expedition had been a private one, I would without any hesitation have returned at once ; but I had to bear in mind that my journey was an official one, on which public funds had been expended, so that it was clearly incumbent upon me to carry through my work if it was at all possible. We were now within 35 miles of Marsabit—a distance the Rendile and Samburu always cover in one march—and I knew that from the summit of one of the mountains there I should

be able to see far enough to the north to take bearings of such hills and landmarks as I considered suitable to complete the natural eastern boundary to the Reserve.

It had taken us two months to reach Lersamis, and even if we were to set out at once, and travel by the shortest and most direct route, we could not reach Nairobi in less than a month. The three or four extra days required to go to and return from Marsabit could matter very little to Mrs. B., while it would make all the difference to the success of my expedition.

After full consideration, therefore, I decided that the proper course to adopt was to go on to Marsabit, and complete the work which I had been sent out to do.

With this resolve in my mind, I made my way down from the little rocky hillock where the interment had taken place, with the intention of going to Mrs. B. to offer her what solace I could in her sore distress, as of course she was utterly prostrated by the terrible tragedy.

It was not long before I was rudely shaken out of my gloomy thoughts, for, on my arrival in camp, I was met by Asa Ram, who brought me the startling news that the whole *safari*, led by a few scoundrels, had mutinied, and—more serious still—that they had, during my absence, seized all the arms and

ammunition, and were openly boasting that they were now the masters and would do as they liked.

This was a very alarming position to be placed in at such a trying and critical moment, and I instantly realised the gravity of the situation. The men were now quite independent of me, and no doubt thought they would be able to dictate such terms as they chose, as I was weaponless and alone among them, and without any resources save what I could exert by moral suasion.

I saw that the only way out of it was to show that I was not going to be intimidated. Without a moment's hesitation, therefore, I went into the midst of the mutinous crowd who were all assembled together within their *boma*. On seeing me enter there was a general hush, and many furtive and evil glances fell upon me as I walked up to the rascals who squatted on their heels plotting and planning mischief.

When I had got into the centre of the mutineers I asked what foolishness was this I heard of them. I could have no nonsense, and they must all be ready to march at two o'clock in the afternoon. Upon this all, *askaris* included, replied with a great shout that they did not intend to go any further into the desert, where they would perish of hunger and thirst. They had got all the rifles now and would do as they liked.



I told them it would be a very serious matter for them if they did not return to their duty at once, and asked if they realised that they would be severely punished later on for taking part in a mutiny against an officer engaged on Government work. They must remember that this was an official expedition, and as I had Government work to do at Marsabit it was my intention to go there and complete it, no matter what obstacles stood in my way, and they must come too or take the consequences.

If they refused to obey I would collect a hundred spearmen from the natives in the neighbourhood and speedily round them up and take them prisoners to Nairobi, where they would be properly dealt with.

There were loud cries and threats from some rascals in the background when I announced my intention.

I then reasoned with the better spirits among the men, and told them that while we were in the wilds I looked upon them all as children of mine, in whose safety and welfare they were well aware I took a deep interest. I fed them when they were hungry, gave them to drink when they were thirsty, doctored them when they were ill, and punished them only if they deserved it. I should be very sorry to have to resort to stern measures, but unless

they returned to their duty at once, I should not hesitate to deal with them severely.

I then called on them to deliver up the arms and ammunition, and told them that within an hour they must all parade outside my tent or be branded as mutineers and punished as such.

I then went back to the shade of a thorn tree near my tent, which was pitched about fifty yards from the men's *boma*, and sat there waiting for the result.

Of course the Headman and one or two others never joined the rebels, and they at once went to the parade ground.

I questioned Munyakai as to the reason of the mutiny, and he told me that it was all owing to a few villains who were tired of the journey and of the strict discipline maintained, and these represented to the others that I was going to lead them into the wilderness, where they would all perish either at the hands of savage natives or from thirst. "And now," observed Munyakai, "they think you will not go on if they make trouble, as they know you are sad." He also told me that for the past week the men had been grumbling very much at the hard marches and the bad water, and had been only waiting for some favourable opportunity to break out in mutiny.

When I had waited for about half an hour, one or

two of the rascals began to creep up, and gradually one by one they came, and before the hour was up every man in the *safari* had fallen into line on the parade ground, and I breathed freely once more, as I saw that the mutiny was completely quelled.

Long afterwards I heard that, fearing I would have them punished on my return, the rogues had concocted quite a plausible tale to account for their action; but they behaved so well subsequent to the mutiny, that I had quite forgiven them by the time we got back to Nairobi, and even if I had been well enough to take an active interest in their prosecution I should not have thought of bringing a charge against them.

As soon as the men returned to their duty I immediately set them to work, and we re-arranged the loads and discarded everything that was no longer required. I found it necessary to have part of B.'s tent burnt, and the rest I had rolled up and put away, as I did not wish painful memories to be recalled to Mrs. B.'s mind by the sight of it.

I also had other articles destroyed which were now no longer of any use, and in this way I got rid of a couple of loads, knowing that every pound I took off the men's burdens would be a considerable help to them when crossing the desert.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### ACROSS THE KAISOOT DESERT

EVEN if I had decided to return to Nairobi immediately after the tragedy, instead of going on to Marsabit to finish my work, the mutiny of the *safari* rendered this course of action absolutely impossible.

I felt that henceforward I was entirely responsible for the safety of Mrs. B., and if at this critical moment I had yielded to the mutineers and allowed them to dictate to me as to where I was to go and where not to go, my authority would have entirely vanished, and I could no longer have been answerable for what might happen.

Of course I kept all knowledge of the mutiny from my companion, as she had already enough and more than enough trouble to bear, and it was not until the tin roofs of Nairobi were in sight that I told her of the peril we had been in at Lersamis.

She was naturally anxious to return to Nairobi at once, but I told her that I must first go on to

Marsabit, which was only one long march ahead, to complete my work and get fresh camels for the return journey. This would only delay her a day or two longer, and then I would go back as quickly as we could travel.

As she was of course in a very dazed and grief-stricken condition, I thought it advisable for her sake to get away from this ill-fated spot as soon as possible. Accordingly about two o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st March, 1908, exactly two months since we left Nairobi, we set out on a most dismal and mournful journey across the sterile and waterless Kaisoot Desert. The dreary landscape added to the depression of our spirits, and never shall I forget the wretchedness of that march. I tried hard to talk but failed miserably, so we rode along in gloomy silence, our minds full of the sad event of the morning.

At about six o'clock I halted the *safari* for an hour on the edge of a bit of bush, and when we had gathered some dry wood we lighted a fire, and soon had a kettle boiling.

I felt I had to rouse my companion out of her despondency, and used all my powers of persuasion to induce her to drink a little tea and eat a biscuit, as she had had practically no food all day. Meanwhile the *safari* rested and refreshed themselves for the next spell of desert march.



At seven we pushed on again across the sandy wilderness, under the guidance of Papai. After a while the moon came out and shed a weird light on our dismal and silent surroundings. Nothing was in view save the long line of men, horses, camels, mules, and donkeys—the rear part stretching away out of sight, hidden by the lava dust which lay here soft and thick under foot.

Now and again the line would get broken, and the rear would lose touch with the front of the caravan. Then there would be a halt and cries of "*Upesi, upesi, simba wabaya hapa*" ("Hurry up, hurry up, the lions are bad here"), the warning cry of the *askaris* being made more realistic as the roar of one of these monarchs of the wilds resounded across the desert.

Occasionally we heard the crash of some ponderous beast as it lumbered off into the gloom, startled by our sudden and strange appearance in that silent waste.

In this way we journeyed on until about midnight, when I called a halt for a few hours' rest. Of course no tents were pitched, as we only intended to make a short stay. I made a bed of rugs for Mrs. B., on which she lay and snatched a couple of hours' uneasy slumber, waking up from time to time with a cry of distress. Meanwhile, I sat on a box close by, with my back against a tree stump, and

my rifle across my knee, doing all I could, when she started up, to pacify and soothe her sorely-tried nerves.

At 4 a.m., after distributing water to the *safari* and drinking a hasty cup of coffee, we set off again, and had a very long and trying day's march across



"THE CAMELS . . . APPEARED TO ENJOY CROSSING THIS DESOLATE WASTE."

the burning desert. The fierce rays of the sun beat down relentlessly, and there was no shade of any kind to be found. Men and beasts suffered greatly, save only the camels, and they appeared to enjoy crossing this desolate waste. The whole district is parched and sterile, and covered with red lava ash, which rose in clouds of dust as we marched along.



penetrating into everything. All round us stretched a sun-scorched, arid plain, and the only thing that cheered our eyes was the view of the cloud-covered mountains of Marsabit, which stood out boldly on the sky-line.

While the *safari* was struggling along listlessly and more or less exhausted by the great heat, every man was suddenly electrified into energy by the cry of "*Fow! Fow!*" ("Rhino! Rhino!") There was an instant's hesitation as to which side they should fly to for safety, and then the dreaded beast was discovered to the left of the track under the shade of a thorn tree, where he had evidently been sleeping until roused to action by the sound of the passing *safari*. He now advanced at a brisk trot, and at sight of him loads were pitched down in all directions, and men fled for safety to any bit of scrub they could find.

I hurried Mrs. B. off to the shelter of the largest tree at hand, and in a few minutes its branches were absolutely black with a swarm of porters.

I then walked out with a heavy rifle so as to intercept the brute if he charged any of the porters, for there were still many of the men straggling up, quite unaware of their danger.

The old rhino advanced with determination for about fifty yards, then suddenly came to a standstill, looked at us for some time with great

curiosity, apparently mingled with malicious joy at having caused so much terror, and in the end turned disdainfully round and trotted off in the opposite direction.

Odd as it may sound, this little adventure cheered us all up wonderfully, and the men, having once more picked up their loads, stepped forward with renewed energy.

It was not until about five o'clock in the afternoon that we finally straggled in to our camping place on the edge of the valley of El Deirim, which in bygone ages must have been a vast crater. There was a waterhole not far off in the bed of a ravine at a place called Reti, which is on the outskirts of the district of Marsabit.

The men were all thoroughly done-up, and as they came in one by one, threw down their loads with a sigh of relief, and made as quickly as possible for the waterhole to quench their burning thirst.

Here I was roused to indignation by the heartless and selfish conduct of my syce Jerogi. I had seen him on the march craving a drink from a comrade whose water-bottle he drained of its last drop without the slightest compunction, although the man tried to get it away from his mouth before he had quite finished it; and now to make the matter still worse, I saw him calmly pull out a large lime-juice bottle filled with water which he had had all the time

concealed under his ragged coat. He proceeded to regale himself with a long drink from this while the others struggled off to the muddy waterhole.

On asking him if he were not ashamed of his despicable conduct, he replied with a grin "*Hapana*" ("No").

As my unfortunate companion was in a most pitiful state and greatly fatigued after all she had come through, I decided to remain at this place for a day, so that she might recover somewhat before we resumed our journey.

In any case this was necessary, as the march through the Kaisoot had proved too much for the donkeys. When darkness fell neither they nor the Headman had turned up and I was very anxious as to their fate out in the desert.

Luckily the night was fine, for the men were so worn-out and tired that I had no tents pitched, Mrs. B. sleeping as on the previous night on a bed of rugs under a rough shelter, while I kept guard close by.

Now that she was left in such a forlorn condition, I feared to let her out of my sight for a moment, lest any catastrophe should overtake her too, and I be left to wend my way back to civilisation alone with such a terrible tale of misfortune to unfold.

With my mind full of these distressing thoughts, I fell into a doze as I sat on a box within a pace or

two of her rude couch of grass and rugs. I do not remember how long I had slept when I was suddenly awakened by a loud cry from Mrs. B. and a mad rush of frenzied ponies and mules tearing past us, not half a dozen yards away.

In a moment the *askaris* added to the panic by discharging their rifles recklessly under the impression that they were aiming at a couple of rhino which had charged the camp and stampeded the animals. I very nearly shot one of the ponies myself before I was quite awake, taking it to be a beast of prey of some kind as it dashed past. Luckily the rhinos were soon driven off, and no harm was done to man or beast. It took some time to round up the ponies and mules, and I almost feared that we had lost them altogether, but in the end all were collected and safely tied up in camp again. It was very nerve-shaking, however, for poor Mrs. B., who had already been so sorely tried.

During the night I had a great fire made on the top of a small hill close to our bivouac to guide Munyakai and the donkeys to our resting-place, but when morning came there was still no sign of them. I therefore sent out a relief party with water to search for them in the desert and kept a pillar of smoke going up from the hill-top to serve as a guide, and at last, late in the afternoon, they succeeded in reaching us in safety. Munyakai then

told me all about the anxious and thrilling time he had had. When he found that the donkeys were too done-up to go on any further he made a *boma* for them. They were attacked in this hastily-made enclosure by a lion, who was most persistent in his attempts to break through. Two or three times he was driven away, but at last, towards morning, made bolder by his great hunger, he would not be denied, and succeeded in seizing one of the poor brutes, which he dragged off and devoured.

During the confusion and alarm which followed, a couple of hyænas made a dash at the elephant's feet, which had been carried on a donkey's back, and dragged them away to some secret lair where, of course, it was impossible to recover them.

In addition to the donkey killed by the lion, two more died of exhaustion during the march; Munyakai cut off their tails and brought them to me, to prove that the animals really had died, and not strayed away and got lost owing to carelessness.

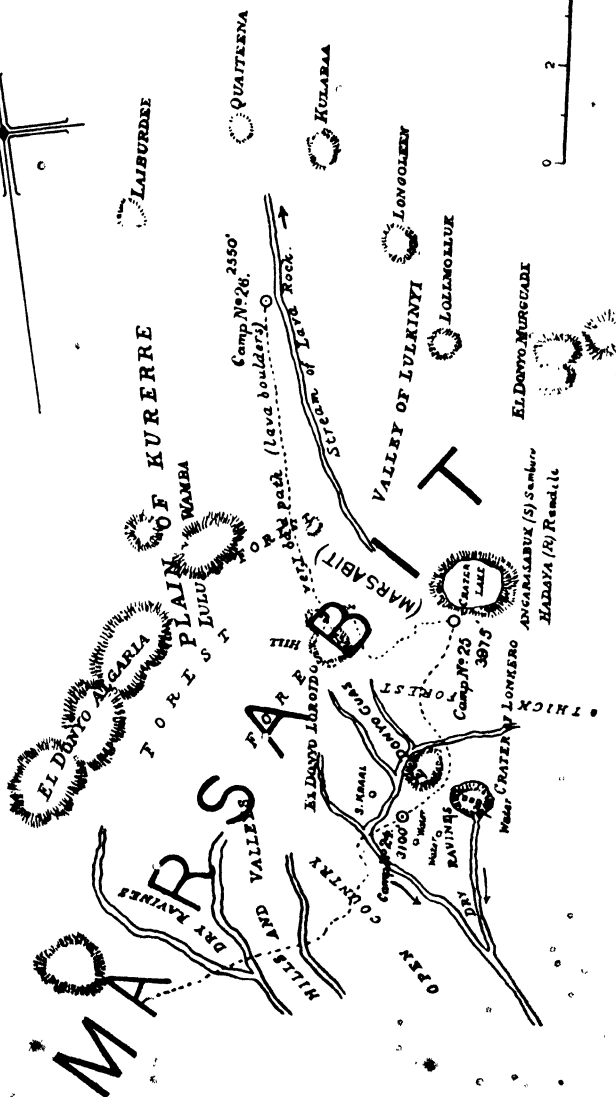
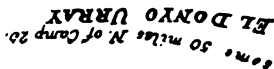
## CHAPTER XXV

### AT MARSABIT

WHEN men and beasts had had a good night's rest we pushed on again early in the morning for Crater Lake, which was the point in Marsabit I wished to reach.

This time our journey was a much more interesting one, as it was through a mountainous, forest-clad country, which afforded an absolute contrast to the dreary desert we had just crossed.

We again began to see game. A great herd of giraffe trooped off to the westward of our route; a couple of rhino, one or two bushbuck, a few oryx, and some female greater and lesser kudu, made the country look a paradise after the desolate and inhospitable tract we had just passed over. We had to scramble through thickets, down the steep sides of ravines, and make our way across valleys, over hills, and along the precipitous edges of extinct craters, such as Kurmarasan and Lonkero. The



latter was especially remarkable for its size and depth. The walls of the crater were practically perpendicular, and were covered over with dense undergrowth, bush and trees, while at the bottom were some waterholes. The natives told me that these were very deep, and that enormous serpents were to be found in them.

It would have been most interesting to explore the bed of this crater, but under the circumstances I was anxious to push on as quickly as possible. My health, too, was beginning to trouble me; so, somewhat reluctantly, I left this crater to our right and marched on between it and El Donyo Guas, which is a very curious-looking, conical hill, the whole of one side from base to summit being grass, while the other side is forest.

Papai was now leading us to a lake, which he called Angara Sabuk, and for the last four miles or so before reaching it our track wound through a thick forest of most beautiful straight lofty trees, many of which were from 100 to 150 feet high, with trunks almost as smooth and upright as the masts of a ship.

It was most delightful riding along under their cool shade after having endured the hot sun for so many days. There were fresh tracks of elephants in all directions, but we saw nothing of the beasts themselves. All at once we came out of the forest and found ourselves in a little glade, and there,



spread out before us, lay the beautiful waters of Angara Sabuk, glistening like a sheet of burnished gold in the brilliant sunshine. At the point where we approached the water the ground sloped gently down to the edge of the lake, which filled up a hollow basin, some 800 yards in diameter, that had



"THE BEAUTIFUL WATERS OF ANGARA SABUK."

once been the crater of a vast volcano. It is for this reason that Europeans call this sheet of water Crater Lake, while the Samburu know it as Angara Sabuk or "Great Water." On every side of the lake save where we stood frowned perpendicular walls of hard, black lava, some 100 feet high or more, clothed in places with verdure of the deepest green.

• It was a most beautiful and refreshing sight, and one to be remembered with pleasure after all the hardships and trials of the burning desert. •

I was called away from the contemplation of this charming scene by the voice of my Headman, who wanted to know where I would camp. As no tents had been pitched since we left Lersamis, I now had to consider what arrangements I should make for the safety and comfort of the unfortunate lady who had been so tragically left in my care. It was quite out of the question that she should again use the tent that was associated with such painful memories, and in any case part of it had been destroyed. It was also unthinkable that she should be left isolated in the midst of wild men and wild beasts, especially after the shock she had just had. I was full of anxiety about her at this time, and constantly dreaded that an accident of some kind might happen to her while we were in the wilds, where at every turn one is liable to run upon an unexpected peril. I felt that I was responsible for her safety, and should always be close at hand to protect her in case of need.

I therefore decided that the best thing to do was to have my own tent, which was, fortunately, quite large enough for the purpose, divided into two compartments. Accordingly I had a partition put up along the centre of it, which made it into

two tents, each with a separate doorway. Outside mine I always had a sentry posted, with instructions to call me on the slightest alarm, as I always lay down in my clothes with a rifle ready to hand in case of need.

I would have given Mrs. B. the whole tent to herself, only that on the day we got to Marsabit I most unluckily fell seriously ill with an attack of fever and dysentery. Rain also began to fall, as it usually does here every day during the forenoon at this season of the year. It was therefore absolutely necessary that I should not only have shelter, but also most careful nursing and attention, as dysentery is no light malady, and if neglected may prove fatal in a few days, especially to one who has had an attack before.

It is impossible for me to express my gratitude to Mrs. B. for the care she took of me during my illness, while she herself was still in the throes of a great misfortune. If I had during these days been left to the tender mercies of my servant, it is more than probable that I should not have been alive to write this account of my expedition, as for some time it was touch-and-go whether the fever and dysentery could be brought under or not. Fortunately I had brought with me some tins of powdered milk, which was quite a new invention, and had been kindly given to me by Mrs. S. during our

expedition to the Kitui district. This was now prepared for me by Mrs. B., and to it, and to her careful watching and attention, I feel that I owe my recovery.

I knew that it would be a very serious matter if anything were to happen to me at this particular time, as in that case my unfortunate companion would be left utterly alone and unprotected in this savage land. The thought of what she might have to endure helped me to fight against my illness and to keep all knowledge of it as far as possible from the men of the *safari*, lest they should think I was now a negligible quantity and break out in mutiny again. Day by day, therefore, I used to show myself at my tent door, where I sat and gave the usual orders about the daily routine, although the internal agonies I was suffering at the time were such as I hope never to experience again.

It was perhaps a mercy that Mrs. B. was taken out of herself by having to turn her attention to nursing at this period of her distress. The very fact that she had to begin anxious work so soon after the tragedy had a good effect on her, as it helped to divert her thoughts and roused her a little out of her despondency.

In a few days' time the fever and dysentery abated, so, as soon as I was at all fit, I called Papai the guide to me and questioned him about the

country to the north. He told me that from a hill near our camp I could see the Urray range of mountains standing out boldly some 50 miles away; I knew therefore that they must be on the edge of the Reserve, as I was now about that distance from its northern border.

Although I gathered that the hill from whence I could spy out the country was only some six or eight miles distant, I felt that in my weak state it would be impossible for me to go there and return between sunrise and sunset, so, as soon as I could move, we took six or eight porters to carry what was absolutely necessary for twenty-four hours, and set out with Papai, leaving the Headman in charge of our camp by Crater Lake. The morning was foggy, and the march was a painful one to me and prolonged on account of the many rests I had to take; but at the end of it, when we got clear of the mist, it was gratifying to find that the highest peak of the Urray range was plainly visible. I lost no time in taking its bearing, as well as those of some other prominent features of the country round about, and these I sketched in on my map, thus completing and linking up the whole chain of mountains and hills which I considered suitable to form a good natural eastern boundary to the Reserve.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### SOUTHWARD ONCE MORE

BEFORE setting out from Nairobi I had intended, as I have already explained, to mark out, not only the eastern, but also the northern boundary of the Reserve. Circumstances were, however, against this, and my health alone made it impossible to consider any further extension of the journey.

The principal object of my expedition having now been attained, it was with a feeling of great satisfaction that I headed the *safari* southward and marched towards civilisation.

On reaching Noubah, a Samburu encampment a few miles from Crater Lake, I hired twelve camels from the local chief, who was named Ledemishi, to enable us to cross the inhospitable desert. He also brought me some sheep and goats, for all of which I paid him with amerikani, wire, beads, &c. We got some cows' milk from him, too, which was most acceptable.

From Noubah we marched to Reti, where there was now, for some reason or other, but a small quantity of muddy liquid in the waterhole. On the way I halted the caravan for half an hour in order to give a rhino which stood in our way a chance to clear off, but eventually I had to shoot it to ensure the safety of the *safari* as it passed. I was afraid to drink the water at Reti lest it should bring back my illness, but it is not altogether bad when not too freely mixed with mud. For Mrs. B.'s sake I was anxious to avoid Lersamis on the way back, as I did not wish her to go through the ordeal of returning to the scene of the tragedy so soon after the event. Neither was it necessary to retrace our steps that way, for I was informed that an encampment of Rendile and a water supply might be found at some little distance to the west of Lersamis, at the foot of the great mountain of Serramba, which rises abruptly out of the plain.

Accordingly I headed the *safari* south-westward for this mountain, and as the Kaisoot Desert stretched between, it had to be faced once more. It took us two days to cross it, and in my weak state I found the march an exceedingly trying and exhausting one. The vertical rays of a tropical sun beat down on us fiercely, and no shade was to be obtained anywhere. The water which we had

brought with us on the camels was used up long before the journey was completed, and when we at last reached the Rendile encampment at Serramba, fourteen of the porters and boys had given up the struggle in despair, and, overcome by the heat and thirst, had fallen by the way.

Munyakai bin Diwani now showed the metal that he was made of, for, collecting half a dozen of the more able porters and getting from the Rendile a couple of camels loaded with jars of water, he started back along the route, and by his prompt action managed to rescue ten of the exhausted men, who were lying stretched out on the path almost at the last stage of death from thirst. They revived somewhat when they had drunk a little of the water which he gave them, and as soon as they were able to move he sent them on to camp without their loads, which were brought in by other men later on. One of the unfortunate porters and three boys could not be found anywhere, and what their fate was, to this day I know not. I sent out search parties, lit fires, fired rifles, and promised the Rendile rewards, but without result. Two of the donkeys also died during the march from want of water. It may be remembered that I had set out from Nairobi with fifty tins to hold water, but these had been subjected to such rough usage on the road that not more than half a dozen were capable of holding anything.



I did not see much game in the desert, as was to be expected, but came across a large turtle wandering about in stolid indifference to its surroundings. The sight of it aroused superstitious fears in some of the men, who at once broke off a few brambles from the scrub and covered it up, I suppose with the object of averting evil.

We found the Rendile at Serramba very kind and hospitable, and although there was after all no spring at this place, and they themselves were compelled to bring water daily from a distance in jars on their camels, yet they freely gave us from the stock which they held in reserve.

Next morning we left our kind hosts and continued our journey towards the Guaso Nyiro, reaching Nayssoe about mid-day. Lemerlene was much pleased to see us again, and brought me some sheep and goats, for which of course I paid him with amerikani and beads. I also asked him to waive his objection to crossing the Samburu country and hire me eight camels to take us to the Guaso Nyiro, as some of the camel men who came with us from Marsabit wished to return to their home from this place.

The old chief, to my surprise, made no difficulty about lending the camels, probably because he had been so liberally paid for those which I had hired for the journey to Marsabit.

Knowing his weakness for sweet coffee, I had a good supply made, which he drank with great gusto, sitting on his skinny and sun-cracked heels at my tent door. While sipping his fifth or sixth cup he asked me through an interpreter if I remembered his warning about the man-eating lion. "Yes," I replied, "as he very nearly got one of us, and would probably have succeeded if we had not been put on our guard by you." The old chief then shook his head very gravely, smacked his lips two or three times, and said that the lion had since then become very bad indeed, and we must be more careful than ever, as everyone in his *manyatta* was terrified of him, and only a couple of nights previously he had carried off a leading elder in the tribe out of his hut, which was only about 200 yards from the place where our tent was pitched.

When I asked for further details of this tragic affair, he told me the following story.

The *manyatta*, it appeared, had been closed as usual, and all the cows, sheep, and goats were safely kraaled inside it; the warriors and elders and young women and children were all asleep, while three or four old women, as is the custom, kept watch over the flocks, sitting beside the embers of a fire. From time to time there came to them the distant roar of a lion, reverberating from the

high granite rocks which hereabouts dot the arid plain. They could hear him as he came closer and closer, making his way towards the *manyatta* along the sandy bed of the Guaso Merele under the gloomy shade of the trees which line its banks. They thought little of this at the time, as there was nothing unusual in the occurrence. He often serenaded the *manyatta* without attempting to break in, but on this night he was apparently hungrier, and therefore more savage, than usual. After a time the roars ceased and there was complete silence. The old crones sitting by the fireside were dozing off to sleep, when suddenly they and the whole encampment were aroused by the noise and uproar caused by the man-eater springing on to one of the flimsy huts which encircled the wall of the *manyatta*, and crashing through on to the terrified sleepers beneath.

Terrified screams rent the air, and the next moment the brute was seen emerging through the low doorway of the hut, with the writhing elder gripped firmly in his vice-like jaws. He quickly disappeared with him through the bush-filled opening of the *boma*, among the stampeding cattle and amid the terrified yells of the Rendile tribesmen. It was a great piece of misfortune that the lion should have chosen an old and rickety roof to jump on

to, as otherwise the huts are made quite strong enough to have kept him out.<sup>1</sup>

When the old chief had finished his story, he swallowed the rest of the coffee, looked round nervously at the gathering gloom, and quickly took himself off to his *manyatta* before darkness closed in. It was very evident that he was in great dread of the man-eater.

Our scanty meal was rather late that evening, and I well remember the anxious glances we cast into the gloomy thicket as we sat at dinner with our files on our knees, listening to the ominous grunts and purrs of that self-same lion. The brute prowled round us all night, but made no attack, as I kept big fires going, and had watchers in pairs on the move round the camp until dawn appeared.

<sup>1</sup> The Rendile often use a rude kind of tent when on the move, but build huts here and there when settled.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### BACK TO THE GUASO NYIRO

It was with great thankfulness that we shook the dust of Nayssoe from our feet when we set out on the following morning for our next camping-place at Lungaya. I left some of my men behind to load up and bring on the camels under the guidance of Karogi, who knew the country thoroughly. All went well on our march, except that a huge rhino charged the *safari* and vented his rage upon a water-can which a porter hastily threw down in escaping out of his way.

The man who had been carrying the tin told me that what actually happened was this. While walking along with the water-can on his head, a rhino burst out from a thicket immediately behind him. To avoid the charge, he made a frantic bound forward, which of course threw the tin backwards from his head. Just as it fell the rhino made a lunge, caught it on the tip of his

horn, and with this unusual trophy vanished into the bush! I laughingly told him that it was the best excuse I had ever heard for getting rid of an uncomfortable load, but that he must now return and bring in the tin. On this he loudly asserted that his tale was true, and brought forward a couple of witnesses to bear him out.

Everyone turned up safely in camp during the afternoon, but there was no sign of the camels. When night came on and they had not put in an appearance, I began to feel anxious, for they were carrying the greater part of the foodstuffs for the *safari*, as well as several other important loads. We did not want any water carried on this march, as we knew we should find it at Lungaya, so to rest the men I had loaded up the camels with many of their burdens.

Early in the morning I sent an *askari* and one of my guides back to Nayssoe to find out what had happened, telling them to follow me to Kavai, where I intended to go at once with the *safari*.

On our way to this place we saw numbers of giraffe, rhino, gerenuk, Grévy zebra, and oryx, also fresh tracks of elephant. I half hoped that when we reached Kavai we should find the camels already there before us, as it was possible that Karogi might have known a shorter way and so missed us, but there was no sign of them anywhere on our arrival.

Next day my messengers arrived from Nayssoë, having covered some forty miles in two days. They brought me news that the camels had left Nayssoe soon after the *safari*, but were nowhere to be seen along the road. This was very disconcerting, as we wanted food badly, and I began to fear that Karogi had been up to some rascality, and had led them astray purposely so that he might steal the loads and disappear into the wilds. It was also possible that he had struck out for the Guaso Nyiro by some different way, and might even now be at Serah, the next camp, having marched there by some other route known only to himself. I therefore despatched Papai and a Masai called Saiba to see if by any chance this was what had happened. These two had already marched twelve miles in the morning, and it was another twelve on to Serah, but they went very cheerfully, and returned at 6 p.m. in the evening, having covered at least thirty-six miles that day. They bore the disappointing news that the camels were not there, and to prove that they had really been to Serah, brought back a stick from our old *boma* at that place.

I now feared that some villainy was afoot and that we might be attacked at any moment. I therefore had a *boma* made, and later on sent the Headman, with three *askaris* and a dozen porters, back to Nayssoe with orders to find out definitely where

the camels had gone, and who had taken them. As we were in an exceedingly wild and uncivilised part of the country, I feared that the Samburu had attacked and captured them, and that the next thing I might expect would be a midnight attack on our camp. This made me most anxious on Mrs. B.'s account. She, however, was full of pluck, and when I mentioned to her that I might possibly have to return to rescue the camels from the Samburu, she seemed rather pleased than otherwise at the prospect of a fight and did not appear to realise the gravity of the situation, for which I was thankful.

I remained on the alert all night, and spent a very anxious time straining my ears to catch any unusual sound. About midnight, when the camp had settled down into absolute quiet, without stir or noise of any kind, we were suddenly startled by a terrific and unearthly yelling and howling of a most uncanny kind. Instantly the whole camp leaped to its feet and everyone seized a weapon of some sort. On investigation, we found that the alarm was created by the weird howling of a pack of twenty or more hyænas, who had come down close to our camp and, evidently at the signal of a leader, howled together in unison. This was repeated time after time; and was probably meant either to frighten us away, or as a reproach to us for having pitched our camp so



close to the only waterhole for miles round in the neighbourhood.

I felt that to a certain extent we deserved this rebuke, for on our first night at Kawai, numbers of wild animals of all kinds came round our *boma* on their way to the waterhole, but were so startled by our appearance that they went away again. On this second evening they had come again, evidently very thirsty, and seeing us still there, had to retire once more without drinking. I felt exceedingly sorry for them, as I knew they must be suffering considerably by this time, and if it had been safe to do so, I should certainly have moved the camp some distance from the water, so as to give them a chance to drink; but I feared to do this in case of an attack by the natives.

Soon after this alarm, at about one o'clock in the morning, Munyakai returned, shouting out to us from afar off so that we might know who he was. He brought us the glad news that the camels were following close behind and that all was well. His appearance was greeted with loud cheers by the *safari*, as it meant that their *posho* was at hand.

It appeared, from what Munyakai told me, though I never quite fathomed the whole story, that the villain Karogi, as soon as we had marched off from Nayssoe, tried to get for himself

some sheep and goats from the Rendile, and as they resented this, they kept back the camels hoping that I would come in quest of them, punish Karogi, and return the sheep. However, the rascal managed to square the matter with them somehow, and they released the camels before the Headman got to Nayssoe.

Munyakai's account seemed to show that the *askari* and guide whom I had sent back from Kawai had never gone to Nayssoe at all, as they had brought the false report that the camels had left Nayssoe soon after ourselves.

There was not much sleep for any of us during the remainder of this night, as a terrific storm of wind, rain, thunder and lightning now came on and lasted until morning. These tropical storms are very different from those we have at home, and come on with most startling suddenness. All at once a fierce blast of wind strikes the tents, nearly knocking them over. Then the heavens are lighted up almost continuously by flash after flash of blinding lightning, while the roar and crash of the thunder are deafening, and the rain comes down in sheets. The storm was so bad that the camels were unable to travel, but one of the camel men came in and said they would follow us to the next camp, and we need not wait for them. It was not until about nine o'clock in the morning that this heavy rain

ceased, and we were able at last to set out for Serah, which we reached safely, early in the afternoon. We heard lions roaring round the camp at night, and a sudden gale of wind nearly carried away the tent.

Early next day the long-expected camels turned up at last, and I was very glad indeed to see them, as food was badly needed for the *safari*, and we had been obliged to shoot meat for them every day. Fortunately the camels arrived just in time to take us across the waterless tract of country which lies between Serah and the Guaso Nyiro; so, when food had been distributed, we started off at once, and before darkness fell had covered a good stretch of that inhospitable desert.

Soon after we had set out on the following morning, as I was riding slowly and painfully along, I saw some vultures on the track just ahead of us. Had I been well enough I would undoubtedly have jumped off my pony and stalked the spot carefully, for I felt sure there would be a kill, and probably lions on it. As it was, I felt little or no interest in anything, and so rode on without making any attempt to come upon them unawares. When we approached the spot we saw, as I quite expected, two lions well out in the open, feeding on an impala which they had killed. On seeing us they left what little remained of their feast and made off.

in the direction in which we were travelling. Instantly Abbudi, grasping his spear and with joy dancing in his eyes, started off in pursuit. He had not run very far when he came up unexpectedly with one of them that had merely gone behind the nearest bush to take cover. Having not the least idea that the beast was so close, the youth approached at full speed and very nearly ran into him; as he did so the lion opened his jaws wide and gave a fierce growl. Instantly Abbudi threw himself back, poised his spear for a thrust, expecting the brute to spring on him, but luckily the lion had just enjoyed a good meal and was in no humour for a fight, so, much to the Masai's relief, he turned aside, and made off into the jungle.

Abbudi's expression was very amusing, when a few minutes later he re-acted the whole of this scene most dramatically, as the Masai love to do. His face was full of exulting pride, and it was evident that he considered it no small thing to have stood up to the lion without having shown any fear or attempted to run away.

I felt much pleased as we approached the Guaso Nyiro, for I knew that when once it was reached, the worst part of our journey would be over, and no matter what happened to me after that, Mrs. B., at any rate, would be comparatively safe, and within reasonable reach of civilisation.

It was extremely hot during the latter part of the march, and but for the fact that the porters were cheered at the prospect of reaching the plentiful waters of the river some time in the afternoon, there would have been much discontent and falling out by the way. The moment the feathery tops of the palm trees that grow here and there along the river were seen, a great shout of joy ran along the line, and every man seemed to shake his fatigue from him as he stepped briskly onward. My heart was often moved with pity for the poor fellows, when I watched them drearily drag one weary foot after another on these hot and exhausting marches, carrying a load of some sixty pounds in weight on their heads day after day. I was very glad for their sakes that the worst part of the journey was now over, and we were again entering a well-watered country, where shorter marches could be made.

On reaching the river the men threw down their loads, and rushed eagerly into the cool flowing stream, to drink their fill of the sweet water.

After an hour's rest I began to look for a ford, for I wished to cross and camp on the south bank as quickly as possible, in case a flood should come and detain me on the wrong side.

We now required the camels no longer, so, to reward the drivers, I had a large pot of coffee made for them, which they thoroughly enjoyed. I

then paid them liberally for having accompanied me through the desert, and on the following morning they returned to their own land, heaping showers of blessings on my head.

While we were crossing the river one of the boys, a lazy, worthless rascal, whom I had often to punish,



"RUSHED EAGERLY INTO THE COOL FLOWING STREAM."

was nearly drowned, as he was carried off his legs and swept away by the force of the stream, and but for a timely rescue it is probable that a crocodile would have seized him among the rocks a little lower down, where these hideous brutes abounded. It was an odd chance that a photograph was being taken of the scene just as this accident occurred.

The relief which I experienced on getting into camp on the southern side of the Guaso Nyiro is indescribable. I slept more peacefully that night than I had done for the past fortnight, and I fervently



"BUT FOR A TIMELY RESCUE IT IS PROBABLE THAT A CROCODILE WOULD HAVE SEIZED HIM."

hoped that the remainder of our journey would be free from further accident or adventure. We were, however, by no means yet out of the grip of the *nyika*.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### WE REACH THE MERU COUNTRY

As I was very anxious to get back to Nairobi as quickly as possible, I determined to march due south through the fertile Meru and Embu country to the east of Mount Kenya, which was much the shortest route, instead of going all the way round by Rumuruti, through a sterile tract where no food could be obtained for the *safari*. •

It was absolutely essential that supplies should be forthcoming, as I had only four days' food left for the men, and it was no small worry to me at times to know that I had about a hundred hungry mouths to fill daily for another three or four weeks.

• I was aware that the tribesmen of the territory I intended to traverse were considered by certain officials to be both hostile and treacherous, and that no Europeans were allowed to enter the country for that reason ; but I have always found that if one knows how to deal diplomatically with the natives



there is hardly ever any trouble with them. At the same time I had heard that the last party that went through this district, not so very long before, had had sixteen men killed in a fight; I must admit, therefore, that I was by no means free from anxiety, as these tribes have undoubtedly from time immemorial suffered from the depredations of passing *safaris*, and might therefore treat us as hostile visitors and give us a very warm reception. After much consideration of all the pros and cons I came to the conclusion that it was necessary to take the risk and go by this route, as I was practically certain, by so doing, of obtaining food supplies for the men.

Luckily, on the very morning after crossing the Guaso Nyiro, while our commissariat was in this low state, I was fortunate in obtaining, from an over-inquisitive giraffe, a couple of days' supply of meat. The unlucky creature came rather close to our camp to breakfast off the green tree tops, and as I was not well enough to stalk it, I requested my companion to do so; although she was naturally loath to shoot one of these beautiful and harmless animals, yet the needs of the *safari* had to be considered and so, all unwillingly, she laid the giraffe low with one merciful bullet.

Before striking south we first made our way to the Samburu village ruled over by Legurchalan,

from whom we had engaged some camels on our way northwards. To reach this village we had to go along a very rough and lava-strewn path beside the Guaso Nyiro. In order to avoid the boulders and fissures in the lava, we tried for part of the march to make our way along that part of the bed



"SHE LAID THE GIRAFFE DOWN WITH ONE MEECHU BUTTEL."

of the river, which was now dry. For a time we got along fairly easily, and found plenty to interest us. The river here has precipitous sides of black lava rock some 60 feet high, in which great natural caverns have been hollowed out by the action of the water, some of them extending for over a hundred feet back from the face. These are

evidently used by the Samburu or Wandorobo as dwelling-places and cattle kraals at certain seasons of the year.

In one of the caves we discovered the lair of a lion with freshly-gnawed bones strewn about it. I must say that I approached the spot with the greatest caution, as I had no ambition to call on the lion in this gloomy place if he should be at home.

After travelling thus for a few miles along the river bed we all at once came to a narrow gorge through which the river ran swiftly, filling it from bank to bank so that it was impossible to go up-stream any further. We did not want to retrace our steps after having come so far, and it was not possible to climb up the precipitous sides, so we were rather in a difficulty; fortunately those who had continued to march along the top heard us shout, and lowered ropes to pull us up. These, however, proved too short, so Asa Ram, the Indian syce, took off his puggari, which was enormous and very strong, and when this was knotted to the rope it just reached to the bottom. By this means some two dozen of us were hauled up the perpendicular face of the rock and landed safely on the top.

Next day, April 13th, we reached Legurchalan's village on the banks of the Mara stream, and found the old Samburu chief delighted to see us. I heard

From him that one of the camels which belonged to Lalla Rookh had died on the return journey from Serah. As I did not wish this handsome young warrior to be put to any loss on my account I sent for him, and very much to his surprise and delight paid him the full value of the beast. He himself protested that he was not in any way entitled to be recompensed for it, as I was clearly not responsible for anything that happened to the camel after it left my *safari*. He was quite a nice youth, and I was glad to be able to make him amends for his misfortune.

Here I discharged my two faithful Samburu guides, Papai and Olasegedidi, paying them off with bales of amerikani, brass and copper wire, and beads. I first offered them rupees, but these they laughingly declined, saying that they would be of no use to them in their tribe except to serve as toys for their children. They were delighted with their reward and left me with many hearty handshakes and good wishes for a safe journey.

On leaving Legurchalan's *manyatta* we marched south to a place called Ongata Mariri, where we camped on the banks of a small stream called the Ooldooga.

Between the Samburu and Meru districts there is a tract that is quite deserted by natives, both nations being afraid to inhabit it. This neutral

zone is beautiful, well watered and grassed, and is an ideal country either for agricultural or grazing purposes. It is fairly well wooded too in places, and will, I am sure, when the Protectorate is more settled, become inhabited by a thriving population.

It was through this savannah-like belt of country, known as the Jombini plains, that we now made our way, and at our first camping-place by the Ooldooga stream I saw a good deal of game, including a herd of about 200 eland, also herds of oryx, Grant's gazelle, some gerenuk, and a few rhino. Here also were great numbers of both Grévy's and Burchell's zebra, the two races meeting on this plain, but herding and feeding quite separately.

I noticed one oryx in particular which I should have been glad to bag, as it had horns about half as long again as any in the herd, and they must have been many inches more than the best previous records for East Africa. I was, however, not well enough to undertake an arduous stalk.

There were thousands of guinea-fowl about, so that there was no lack of sport of all kinds. It is altogether an ideal hunting country, which I have recommended should be thrown open to both sportsmen and explorers.

From the Ooldooga we pushed on to a stream called Leilabah, where again game abounded;

numbers of the beautiful crested cranes were much in evidence, while the ubiquitous guinea fowl could be flushed out of every bush.

The following day we reached the outskirts of the Meru country, and apparently took all the people by surprise. We were at once looked upon as a



"WE REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MERU COUNTRY."

hostile raiding party and there was a tremendous commotion raised, war-drums being sounded, and shouts exchanged from village to village, these being built very close together in this populous country. All the cattle were instantly driven off to places of concealment in the forest, and in an incredibly short time we were surrounded by a howling

band of some three hundred spearmen, under their various chiefs, all brandishing their weapons.

Things looked very serious, and I must admit I felt somewhat alarmed. I therefore placed the *safari* in a safe position on a rise overlooking a village, and walked out towards the yelling crowd of practically



“OVERLOOKING A VILLAGE.”

naked savages, making my way to a spot where I saw a group of elders congregated, evidently discussing the situation. I made the usual peaceable salutation, and we shook hands. I then explained in Syahili, which one or two of the elders understood, that I only wanted to pass through their country peaceably, and so long as I was not

unmolested I would not interfere with them in any way whatever.

They seemed much impressed by the fact that I went out to them alone and unarmed, and took it at once as an explicit sign of my good intentions. As soon as they fully realised this, they shouted to the



"THE HOWLING ARMY THEN . . . DISBANDED."

warriors to retire and lay aside their arms, as we were friends and had come on a friendly mission.

The howling army then disbanded and dispersed as quickly as it had made its appearance, and we were shown a pretty site for our camp at a place called Athinga, close beside the village of the chief,



who was called Dominuki. Here in the course of an hour we were surrounded by hundreds of eager and curious savages. We had apparently arrived at an opportune moment, because a short time previously Dominuki had been attacked by a combination of two tribes, the Kanjai and the Munyezu. Of course



"DOMINUKI . . . SENT US PRESENTS OF CATTLE."

Dominuki was anxious to enlist me and my half-dozen rifles on his side so that we might make a combined attack on his enemies, and to this end he sent us presents of cattle, sheep, goats, milk, honey, eggs, etc., for which I duly returned presents of equal value. The old chief himself was exceedingly

ill with fever and ulcers, for which I treated him to the best of my ability.

He now organised a tremendous *ingoma* (native dance) in our honour. All the warriors in the locality, to the number of about 500, turned up in their war-paint and gathered in a field close by, where apparently all such ceremonies were held.

To begin with, the old Witch Doctor took a small gourd filled with banana beer into the centre of the circle of warriors, and made a most impassioned speech, which was listened to with rapt attention and punctuated every now and again with a chorus of approval from the audience. At the conclusion of the speech a piece of turf was dug up from the field, the beer was placed in the hollow, and the Witch Doctor, with a final peroration, smashed it to atoms with his club, then jumped and stamped on it, finally covering it over with the turf. The whole of this performance, I presume, denoted death and extinction to all enemies of the tribe.

The dance then commenced, and was a most weird and wild affair. The Witch Doctor first took the precaution of placing a guard around us, so that none of the excited warriors might do us an injury while in their half-frenzied state. The warriors, decked out in their semi-Masai garb, and painted hideously, then formed up in two companies in front of us, one to our right and the other to our left.

Groups of from four to six advanced from each side, and with savage shouts and yells dashed at each other, bounding into the air with great leaps, and making their spears quiver in their hands. They circled round in front of us, feigning to attack each other and making fierce passes in the air, leaping and yelling all the time, until one party retired, pursued by the other.

This was repeated time after time, until the whole of the company had in turn taken part in the display, after which the two companies united and went round us in a great circle, springing and bounding and hurling defiant words at their absent enemy—in this case the warriors of a chief called Thularia, whose district adjoined.

During all the time that this war-dance was going on the women of the tribe kept away at a discreet distance, not daring to come near. Now, however, on its conclusion they approached, decked out in all the finery of the Meru belles, and each with a broad smile on her face, without any bashfulness or timidity, selected a favourite warrior, and a peace *ingoma* commenced. In this the performers made a ring, the men on the outside and the women on the inside, facing each other. Then, with hands on each other's shoulders, they commenced an up-and-down motion, raising themselves on their toes and then sinking down again on their heels, accompanied

by a monotonous chant which was weirdly interrupted now and then by the beating of the war drum, or the savage yell of an excited warrior.



"DECKED OUT IN ALL THE FINERY OF THE MERU BELLES."

The festivities were kept up throughout the day, nor did they cease at nightfall, for while I lay awake, far into the night, I could plainly hear the fiendish sounds of the heathen revelry.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THROUGH THE MERU COUNTRY

NEXT morning we started off with an escort of about 100 of Dominuki's warriors and made for a place called Kamuru, which was ruled over by Thularia, the chief of Dominuki's enemies.

We had to march through forest and thick jungle, and I was not at all easy in my mind about the safety of the *safari* in such an enclosed country, where we were liable at any moment to be surprised. I therefore threw out my escort of warriors as an advance and flank guard to prevent any sudden attack on the caravan.

On reaching Kamuru we found that Thularia was very diffident about coming out of his fortified *boma*, as he feared I should take him prisoner for his share in the fighting with Dominuki. However, he eventually appeared, escorted by his Prime Minister, and Umbrella Bearer, and a party of warriors. First, there was the usual exchange of presents, and then,

commenced the *shauri* for the release of the prisoners he had captured from Dominuki. It was a very long one, but I eventually succeeded in making him come to terms which were just and equitable to both parties. Apparently in the first instance some of his men had been treacherously killed by Dominuki's warriors, and for every man so killed Thularia demanded 10 cows, the usual fine in the Meru country for a life taken. Nothing was demanded by either chief for the warriors killed in battle, as a fine is never inflicted when a man is killed in a fight with his spear in his hand.



"THULARIA . . . EVENTUALLY  
APPEARED."

When the terms were settled and the *shauri* over, I sent back word to Dominuki that as soon as he paid the fine of cows, imposed according to custom, his prisoners would be released.

After this a market was opened, and I was able,

with the help of the chief, to procure a good supply of food-stuffs, flour, beans, and bananas, of which I was sadly in need.

We then took our departure from Kamuru and proceeded to Munyezu, still through a very thickly enclosed country and through vast plantations



"A GOOD SUPPLY OF FOOD-STUFFS."

of banana trees. On the way we saw by the side of the path the scalp of one of Dominuki's men, who had been treacherously speared while attempting to retrieve some stolen cattle.

The chief of this district, whose name was Pymwezu, met us in quite a friendly way. He promised us food galore, but his people were not so

hospitably inclined. They seemed very suspicious of the *safari*, and paid no attention to his orders, so that we got practically nothing here—in fact, the only good thing that Pymwezu did was to bring us a basketful of most delicious tomatoes, which was the greatest possible treat he could have given us after our long and much-felt lack of fresh fruit and vegetables. I was so anxious to make these last as long as possible, that I gave them into the special charge of my most reliable donkey-boy. I was much surprised, therefore, when I did not see them on the table next day, and on asking Paul, the cook, where they were, he calmly told me that there were none. “But,” I said, “I gave the donkey-boy a basketful this morning.” “*Ndio*,” answered honest Paul, “*lakini shauri ya Hamesi*” (“Yes, but Hamesi knows all about it”). I called up the donkey-boy, and asked him what he had done with them, when he gravely informed me that while he was busy repacking a load a donkey had eaten them! I remarked that I greatly feared the donkey in question was a two-legged one—whereupon the rogue hung his head. Such are some of the little trials and tribulations to be expected on *safari*, but when one gets to know the character of the native, one can sympathise with these children of the wilds, and even smile at the want of ingenuity which they display when they wish to



concoct a convincing tale to cover some little delinquency.

I made no delay at Munyezu, and continued the march to a place called Surah, where I was met by another chief named Mithari, who seemed to be a man of considerable importance in these parts. Here, at the request of all the chiefs concerned, I held a big *shauri* and arranged terms of peace between the three tribes which had recently been warring with each other. Mithari represented Dominika's interests, while the other chiefs present were Thularia, Kizitu, and Mundu wa Weru.

Pymwezu did not turn up, as he was evidently alarmed about his share in the fight, but he sent Kizitu in his place.

This man brought with him as interpreter a young and good-looking wife, who spoke fluent Swahili and was loaded down with brass and copper wire and many rows of beads. She was evidently a lady of importance, and one who knew how to make herself respected—a thing most unusual in the wilds of Africa, where a woman is considered a mere chattel. In this case, her good lord himself carried an easy camp chair about for her, in which she sat in great state interpreting throughout the *shauri*.

By a remarkable coincidence this good-looking wife was an old *dito* (sweetheart) of my boy Mbusonye, who was a Masai, and it was very amusing to watch

him, for as soon as he caught sight of her, he instantly divested himself of his coat and all other civilised attire which he wore when in attendance upon me, and, borrowing Abbudi's spear, went and made salutation to the lady, and hung over the back of her chair in a most lover-like way. They held a long conversation, but what it was about I know not. The result, however, was that my boy came to me later on and asked me to let him have a month's wages (15 rupees) in brass and copper wire, so that he might deck out his old sweetheart with it.

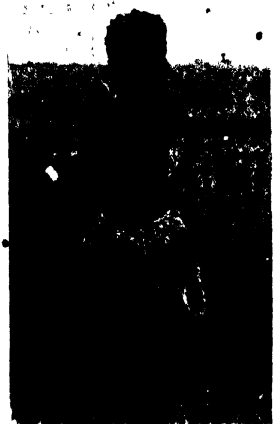
The *shauri* with the chiefs lasted for a considerable time, but finally the terms of peace which I proposed were agreed to by all as fair and just. Mithari accepted the terms provisionally on Dominuki's behalf, so I hope things are more peaceable in that part of the country now. The whole district is an exceedingly beautiful and fruitful one, and it is a great pity that it should be torn by these tribal dissensions.

Quite a brisk market was now opened, and good trade done between the *safari* and the people in the locality. Mithari provided us with sheep, goat's milk, and food, for which we paid him with brass and copper wire and amerikani. He remained in our camp as a guarantee for our safety, and kept with him, as a messenger, a quaint-looking youth clothed in banana leaves.

Rain came down in torrents during the night, which made matters very unpleasant, especially for the porters who had to carry the tents, etc., next day, as their loads weighed nearly twice as much when wet as when dry.

Our next march took us to a place called Myeru,

and from thence we pushed on to Mackinduni through a thickly-populated and well-cultivated piece of country. We had to cross a very deep ravine, at the bottom of which ran a stream. Here Mithari took leave of us, for he said he dare not cross, as the people on the other side were his enemies and would kill him on his return journey if he went with us through their



"A QUIANT-LOOKING YOUTH CLOTHED IN BANANA LEAVES."

country. I gave him a handsome present of copper wire and amerikani, and he departed quite pleased with the gift.

Meanwhile the *safari* had been crossing the river by means of the hollowed-out trunk of a great tree which formed a rude bridge. All passed over in safety, with the exception of one pony that slipped over the side. The poor beast fell heavily on to a smooth rock, some eight feet below, and then tumbled

down into the turbulent stream. I thought his back must be broken and gave him up for lost, as I saw him borne swiftly away towards the rapids lower down. Here, however, Jerogi, the syce, redeemed his reputation, for without any hesitation he dived in, seized the reins, and swam with the pony safely to shore. Strange to say, the animal was quite unharmed by the accident.

As soon as we crossed the ravine, the people fled from our path, and at a safe distance lined the tops of their village stockades to watch us while we passed. As they sat thus, clustered together in black rows, they looked for all the world like vultures. Soon we came to a solitary hut, and from it heard the unmistakable cackle of a hen—a sound we had not heard for months, for the Masai, Samburu, and Rendile consider it incompatible with their dignity to have hens in their *manyattas*. Thinking that we might be able to buy a few eggs, I sent a man who could talk the local language to make a purchase with some beads. The owner of the hut was completely taken by surprise and was so terrified at the sight of a stranger that, snatching up his spear, he fled for his life, leaving everything behind him, including a wife and new-born baby!

We halted for breakfast close to this hut, as there was a little clearing there, and we could not be surprised by a rush of the savages if they had any

idea of attacking us. In a short time four old men cautiously approached, to find out our intentions and reasons for traversing their country. On hearing that we were quite a peaceable *safari* merely passing through, they seemed greatly re-



"A COUPLE OF YOUNG FOWLS . . . WERE PERCHED ON A DONKEY."

lieved and brought a grateful present of eggs and a couple of young fowls. As these were alive, they were perched on a donkey, and so rode along daily until Paul wanted them for the pot.

In this neighbourhood we came upon a woolly-headed and much wrinkled old native busily engaged, with all the zest of a schoolboy, in setting a cunningly-made bird trap, in which Mrs. B. took

a great interest, with a view to reproducing it for the amusement of her little son when she returned to England. I am indebted to her for the detailed description which is given in the Appendix. It shows the ingenuity and cleverness of the native, who constructs the entire trap with a few sticks and a string made out of the fibre plant.

As we approached our next camping-place, I had a practical illustration of the state of savagery in which these tribes dwell. I was attracted by the loud wailing of a poor woman by the wayside and discovered that she was weeping for her husband, who had been killed on the previous day merely because he had attempted to penetrate into the neighbouring district. It was no wonder that I had failed in my efforts to secure a runner to take letters on to Nairobi. For some time past I had tried to get a messenger, but although I offered a handsome reward, I could find no one willing to undertake the task, all protesting that they would be set upon and killed by the other tribes on the way.

We reached Makinduni late in the afternoon of the 22nd April, and camped under the shade of some spreading trees. The guide went off to a stockaded village about half a mile away, and brought back the local chief, who promised with much vehemence that we should have lots of food

for the men. Luckily, we were not in great need of it, as we got nothing. The natives here were inclined to be hostile, so much so that I feared an attack; I therefore thought it advisable to keep the chief in camp all night, though he was rather loath to remain. There was very great excitement among the tribe, who gathered in great numbers all round our camp as night came on, and yelled and howled in a most threatening manner.

I had in my *safari* a man who had been born and bred in this part of the country, and, as I could hear from my tent the noisy yellings of another war party at a little distance, evidently holding a meeting of some sort, I sent him to find out what it was all about. After a couple of hours he returned, and told me there had been a big *shauri* of warriors and elders, who had been called together to decide whether they should allow us to pass through their country in peace or fall upon us during the night, wipe out the *safari*, and loot all our goods. The younger and more fiery warriors were for declaring war; the elders, however, refused to agree to this proposal, as they said that the solitary white man would never come through their country with a white lady unless he possessed some very powerful medicine with which he would be able to annihilate the warriors if attacked. The Witch Doctor said that they had never seen a white lady before, and it might bring great misfortune if any harm

were to befall her. Finally, after long and hot arguments on both sides, it was agreed that the *safari* should be allowed to go through unmolested.

The disappointed warriors vented their animosity in howls and yells round our camp. I therefore sat up all night long outside the tent door, with a rifle across my knee, never knowing what moment they might change their minds and attack us. From time to time I let off a rocket, which seemed to have a tremendous effect upon the howling warriors, for the shouting would cease for a little while and all would be quiet.

I was exceedingly thankful when at last dawn appeared, and I was able to get the *safari* away from these hostile people. This was the only occasion upon which I was at all anxious about the attitude of the natives whom I had found most friendly and hospitable throughout the expedition. It is more than probable that this particular tribe, living on the outskirts of the Meru country, had had to bear the brunt of many raids by Arab and Swahili caravans, and hence resented the intrusion of the *safari* into their territory.

Before the chief of these truculent people was released he procured me a quaint-looking guide named Mukera, who vowed that he knew the road to the Tana river as well as the palm of his hand. So, telling him to lead the way, we marched off.



## CHAPTER XXX

### BACK TO NAIROBI

FOLLOWING our new guide through forest and glade we were soon beyond the southern border of the Meru country, and, continuing our march, found ourselves in an uninhabited and park-like tract of country, where, as evening closed in, we camped at a place which our guide called Komongera. We began again to see game here, and it was a pleasure to startle out of the long grass a reedbuck, or perhaps a steinbuck, and watch them bound away to safety. Now and again, in a stony part, we might perhaps surprise a shy little klipspringer.

At Komongera our guide informed us that the Tana was not far away, and that he could lead us to a native bridge which spanned it. I knew there were scores of rivers and streamlets running into the Tana from Mount Kenya, while there would be practically none flowing into it on the other

side, so that if we could get across we should be able to march much more rapidly. I therefore gave him directions to lead us by the most direct route to this bridge.

Mukera, however, must have been rather vague as to its position, for, according to his story, we

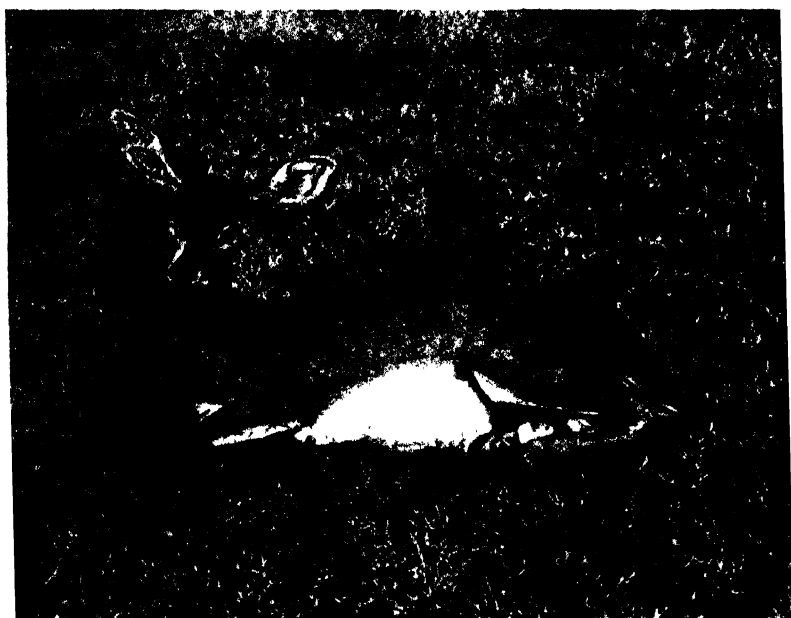


"TO STARTLE OUT OF THE LONG GRASS A REEDBUCK."

were always just coming to it, but we never seemed to get any closer, either to the Tana or to the bridge, all the time he was with us.

From Komongera we pushed on through a deserted and somewhat hilly country with fine trees dotted here and there over the landscape. Our path

took us under some of these, and the branches being low, one had to be on the alert to avoid a collision. I was riding quietly along as usual, just ahead of Mrs. B., when I heard a crash behind me, and looking round saw that she had been dragged off her pony by an overhanging bough, while, to make



"OR PERHAPS A STEINBUCK."

matters worse, her foot was entangled in the stirrup. Luckily, the pony stood perfectly still, and she was quickly released from her perilous position, none the worse for her heavy fall.

Soon after this incident we made our way along the bed of a stream called the Kichenev, and at

last, late in the evening, arrived at a place called Kubwaney, which is inhabited by the Tharaka tribe, whom we found to be quite friendly. These people speak a different language to that used in the Meru country, and they struck me as being somewhat like



"OR A SHY LITTLE KIDSPRINGER."

the Wakamba in appearance. The women wear beautifully-worked goat-skins, all covered over most artistically with little shells and beads. We noticed some cattle here, and a great number of goats, but the *shambas* (plantations) were very poor and badly cultivated.

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NOT EXCHANGEABLE AND  
NOT SALABLE.

Our next march was a particularly difficult one, through tangled vegetation and across numerous ravines and rivers. As we emerged from some dense tropical growth, we unexpectedly found our-



"THE WOMEN WEAR BEAUTIFULLY-WORKED  
GOATSKINS."

selves on the bank of a swiftly flowing stream, which the guide told me was called the Mutonga. I saw that the crossing would be a difficult one, so called for a man who could swim well to go over.

with one end of a long rope. Mukera instantly volunteered and proved himself most useful; without any hesitation, he seized the rope, plunged into the torrent and, swimming like a duck, struggled



"I GOT THE SAFARI TO LINE THE FORT."

bravely with his heavy burden to the other side, where he secured it firmly to a stout tree. We then pulled the rope taut and fastened it to another convenient tree on our side. Holding on to this

B B

support, the men were able to cross one by one with their loads on their heads. We had, however, great trouble with the donkeys and cattle, and it was with much difficulty that we prevented some of the former from being carried away and drowned. I got the *safari* to line the rope from one side to the other, and the donkeys were then passed over one by one on the up-stream side of the rope, and thus kept from being washed away.

I had Mrs. B. carried across on the shoulders of four of the sturdiest men in the *safari*, who would not easily be swept away by the turbulent and dangerous stream. Even so, she very nearly had a dip in the river, as at one time they were almost carried off their feet by the current. She herself wished to walk over holding on to the rope, but this I would not agree to, as I feared she might take a chill and get fever.

When the Mutonga had been safely cleared, the donkeys were loaded up again, and we had barely proceeded another couple of miles and were just beginning to get dry, when we reached another river called the Mara, also in flood, and even more difficult to cross than the Mutonga. The same manœuvres had to be gone through again, and it gave us four hours' hard work before all had crossed over and we could pitch camp at a place known as Kairunya, on the south bank of the river. We

found this particular strip of country a most troublesome, and tiresome one to traverse, for we were constantly coming upon unexpected obstacles in the shape of great ravines, streams, and rivers, which



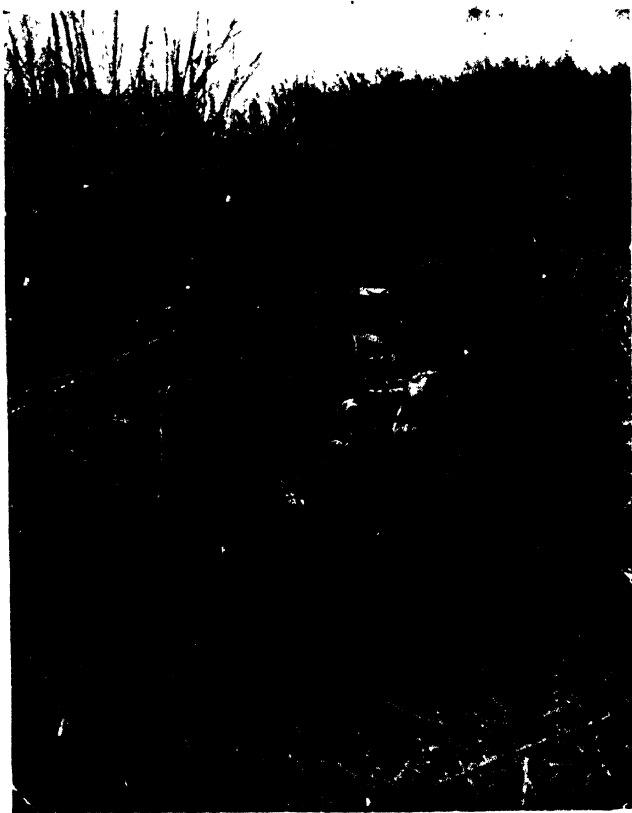
"WE REACHED ANOTHER RIVER CALLED THE MAPA."

made our progress very slow. The prospect was also a cheerless one, as hardly a living thing was to be seen.

• At our next camp, at a place called Kangono,



we were visited by the local chief, named Njerōō, arrayed in a gorgeous headdress made of the black and white long-haired skin of the collabus monkey. He was of a crafty and cunning-looking type, and



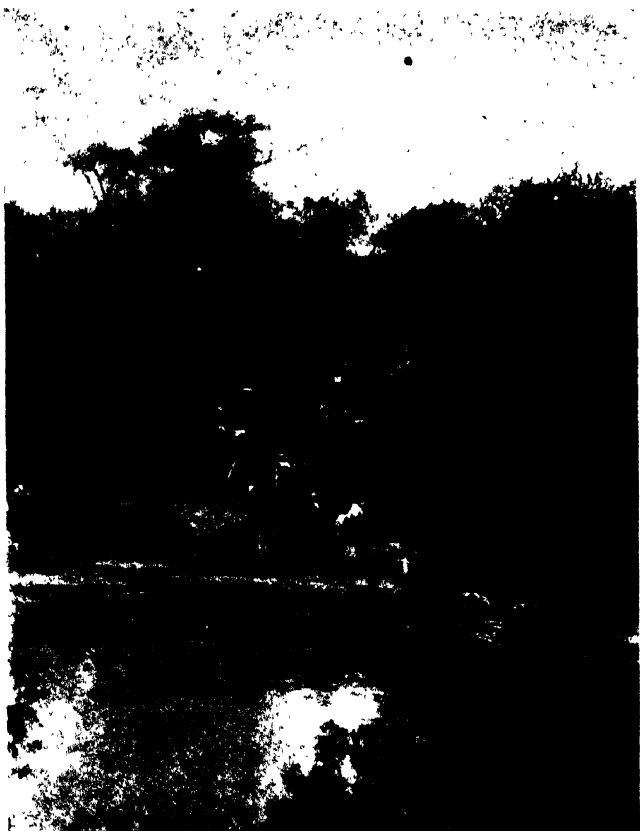
"UNEXPECTED OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF STREAMS."

his appearance gave one the impression that treachery and rascakty were inborn in him, but of course one cannot always judge by looks, and he may have been a very decent fellow.

• He was accompanied by a rather fine-looking savage, who carried a beautifully-made Masai spear; this man told me he often went to the Government station at Embu, and was, in fact, going there the following day. As I wished to send an official letter to the officer in charge, I asked him to call for it in the morning before he started. He promised me faithfully that he would do this, but as I did not quite trust him I requested him to leave his spear as a pledge. This he readily agreed to do, driving it into the ground at my tent door. Instead, however, of coming in the morning, he crept into the camp in the darkness of the night, cautiously took his spear from under the nose of the *askari* on sentry, and I never saw him again. •

At this same place another wily native tried to play a trick on us, but unfortunately for himself it failed. He was an avaricious-looking villain, and as he prowled round the camp he caught sight of some coils of copper wire which he greatly coveted. Paul, the cook, happened to pass by as he was gloating over the wire, and told him he could have a coil if he brought a dozen eggs in exchange. On hearing this his face lit up with joy, and off he went, returning in a little while with the eggs. When he was questioned as to their freshness, he asserted many times that they were quite "new laid." To

make sure, however, Paul tested them by putting them into a bucket of water, when he found that every one of them floated. They must have been months old! The cook was highly indignant that a



"ON THE WAY WE HAD TO CROSS SEVERAL MORE RIVERS."

*shenzi* (savage) should try to get the better of him in this way, so calling for the assistance of a few men of the *safari*, he caught the rogue and broke the whole reeking dozen over his unfortunate head

• to the huge delight of the onlookers, including a good number of his own tribe, who seemed immensely amused at the punishment inflicted.

• From Kangono we struck south-eastward, and on the way we had to cross several more rivers, which gave us a great deal of trouble and delayed us for hours.

• On this march the pony called "The Mule" died. He had been suffering for several days from some internal disease, and although he was being led carefully along by the syce, the rivers and ravines which he had to get over proved too much for him, and he suddenly collapsed.

Notwithstanding the fact that we had been on the move practically all day, yet when evening found us pitching our tents at a place called Uriyeree, we could not have been more than half a dozen miles, as the crow flies, from our last camp.

• At Uriyeree the guide came to my tent and with much gesticulation informed me that the long promised bridge over the Tana was now quite close, and that we should reach it at the end of the next day's march. By this time I had very little faith in Mukera's reliability, but I had of course to be guided, more or less, by what he said, as I was absolutely in the dark regarding the geography of the country, maps of which did not exist.

• From Uriyeree we pushed on next morning

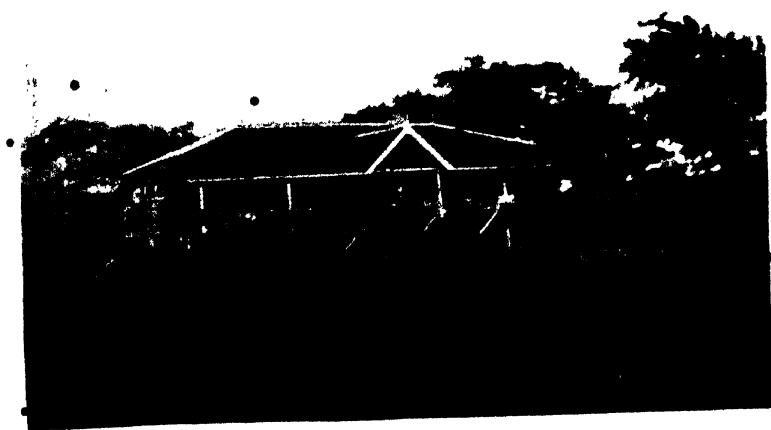
towards the Tana, and as I rode along at the head of the *safari*, I was much surprised to see a white man with an escort of natives in war dress coming along towards me. On approaching nearer I discovered that he was an old acquaintance of mine whom I had met at Fort Hall a couple of years previously. He had heard news at his *boma* at Embu that a European was coming down, and he had sallied out in hot haste to see who it was who had broken the local taboo by marching through this dangerous country.

He told me that my guide was mistaken as to the bridge over the Tana, as none existed to his knowledge, and that the nearest way to Nairobi from our present position was through his *boma* at Embu.

When Mukera discovered that he was found out, he disappeared off into the jungle without asking for any reward for his services. I have often wondered what his game was in misleading us as he did. I can only imagine that he was told by his people to guide us beyond the borders of their district and then decamp on the first opportunity.

Next day, after a march of fifteen miles, we reached Embu, and as we dined that evening with a pleasant party under the hospitable roof of the District Commissioner, I felt more relieved than I can express to realise that we were back once more within reach of civilisation.

My health, too, improved considerably now that the great strain was over, so it was with a comparatively easy mind that I set out next day towards Fort Hall, which is two short marches from the Embu *bonia*. Before starting we received many warnings from our kind host to beware of the rhino



"WE REACHED EMBU."

and buffalo which infested the track. The timely caution was indeed very necessary, for our adventures were not yet over, and disaster nearly overtook us just as we were almost out of the toils of the *nyika*.

It happened that our camping-place was on a little rise on the edge of a great papyrus swamp, and while sitting on a chair overlooking it, I saw plainly, with

the naked eye, the black backs of a large herd of buffalo grazing peacefully at no great distance. I thought it would be most interesting and quite safe to walk over and take a closer view, and, if possible, get a photograph of them. From where I stood I thought this might easily be done by stalking along under cover of a ridge and some long grass which extended almost up to the beasts. Accordingly we set out and walked carefully along under cover, until we suddenly found ourselves close to a single bull standing apart from the rest of the herd. He did not see us at first, but a treacherous gust of wind told him of our presence, and he came straight towards us at a gallop. I was surprised at this, as, unless molested, a buffalo as a rule clears off on scenting danger, but I found out afterwards that these beasts had lately been attacked by several parties, and were therefore very vicious. I was much alarmed at his sudden onset, and having no desire to see the brute vent his rage on one of us, I covered him with my rifle, at the same time asking Mrs. B. to fire, as I intended to wait until he was quite close so as to make a sure shot. The next thing I saw was the great bull taking a header while still in full career, stopped by my companion's timely and well-placed bullet.

I was naturally delighted, but the next second my joy was turned into the gravest anxiety, for lo!

Over the rise and thundering along through the long grass came the whole herd of about 150, making straight as a die for us at a steady gallop, the charge being headed by a bull with huge horns. It was an impressive and awe-inspiring sight to watch the great herd come on at a determined pace, with horns lowered and tails up, looking the very embodiment of savage power.

The moment was a very critical one, and the dangerous situation in which we now found ourselves had developed with startling suddenness. I knew that our only chance was to shoot the leader, as the whole herd would then probably turn aside and not trample us to death; so, saying to my companion "We must drop the leading bull or we're done," we both let drive.

When they got within about thirty yards of us, the leader fell with a crash. On seeing this the whole herd halted and stood looking at us as we lay quietly on the ground in front of them, partly concealed by the grass. The situation was so alarming that the *askaris* lost their heads and opened fire. Luckily they forgot in their terror to take any aim, and their bullets ploughed into the ground, not ten yards ahead. Had they gone into the herd, they would have infuriated the beasts, and we should inevitably have been trampled to death. The noise and smoke from the black powder made by the



*askaris'* Martini rifles had the effect of turning them off a little to our right, where they again halted and stood looking at us, undecided what to do now that their leader was gone. Finally, to my intense relief, they galloped off and disappeared into the depths of the papyrus swamp.

It was a providential escape from what might have been a dire calamity, and I made a mental vow that nothing whatever would induce me to leave the beaten track again while on this expedition.

The solitary bull which Mrs. B. had first fired at lay stretched out upon the ground, while the great leader of the herd had again got on his legs and managed to reach the shelter of the papyrus in a very tottery condition.

I felt convinced that he would die there and that we should get him next morning, as of course it was out of the question to do anything further just then, and indeed my only anxiety was to get back to camp as speedily as possible.

When all the excitement was over I asked Mrs. B. what her sensations were when the herd was galloping at us, and she replied: "Something like what I suppose an infantry soldier feels when he is resisting a charge of cavalry—a case of beat them off or get trampled"—which I considered a very cool summing up, considering the grave

peril she had just gone through without flinching in the least.

Thus ended the last of our adventures on this eventful journey, and I was very glad of it as I was not in a fit state of health to cope with them, and had



"BROUGHT HIS FINE HEAD SAFELY AFTER US TO NAIROBI."

no desire that any further catastrophe should befall us now that we were within 100 miles of Nairobi.

When we struck camp on the following morning I left a gun-bearer and *askari* behind to search for the body of the great bull. They found it, as I expected, at the edge of the papyrus, and brought his fine

head safely after us to Nairobi, where on measuring it I found the spread of the horns to be just a shade over 48 inches.

The following afternoon we at last reached the



“CAUTIOUSLY SPYING ON THE SAFARI.”

Tana, and as I approached the boat ferry which crosses it, I suddenly came upon a native with a bow in his hand and a well-stocked quiver at his back, cautiously spying on the *safari* from the

cover of a large tree. On seeing me with my camera levelled at him, he dived off into the thicket with a startled yell.

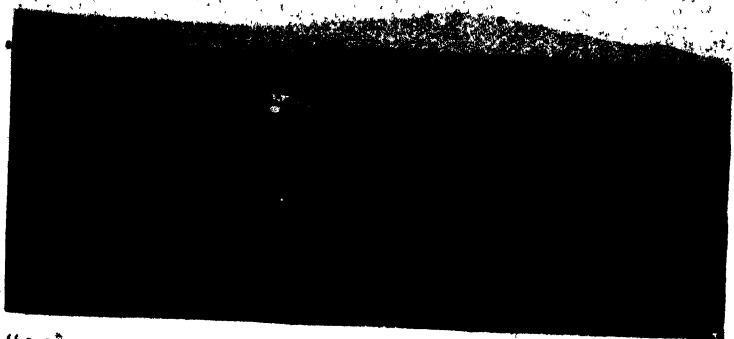
I intended to have camped at Fort Hall at the end of this march, but, as we had to cross the river by relays in one little boat, and the mules and donkeys showed a strong objection to being towed at the stern, it was nearly 9 o'clock in the evening before the whole *safari* got over. I was compelled, therefore, to remain by the river, although I was anxious to see the doctor at Fort Hall at the earliest possible moment.

During the crossing of the Tana, the mule which I rode after the death of Aladdin was very nearly drowned. It had been hauled across the river with much pains by means of ropes, but no sooner was it released on the bank than it deliberately plunged into the swollen torrent to rejoin the other mule that was still on the far side awaiting his turn to be pulled over. Luckily, there was an island in mid-stream just below where the mule jumped in, and on this he was flung by the flood, so after a great deal of trouble we eventually managed to rescue him from his awkward position and bring him safely to the bank.

On the following morning I looked long at the Tana river, which rolled at my feet, and beyond at the giant peak of Mount Kenya, which glistened in

the morning sunshine. It was with a sigh of relief that I turned away to contemplate the view to the south which showed me that we were almost at our journey's end.

On arriving at Fort Hall an hour or so later, I went immediately to see the Medical Officer, Dr.



"I LOOKED LONG AT THE TANA RIVER, WHICH ROLLED AT MY FEET,  
AND BEYOND AT THE GIANT PEAK OF MOUNT KENYA."

Lindsay, and was lucky enough to find him at home. His advice was most helpful, and I am much indebted to him for his kindness and attention.

A few more uneventful marches brought us to Nairobi, which I was exceedingly glad to reach. It was an intense relief to feel that I need have no further anxiety on Mrs. B.'s account, and to know

that, although sad calamities had overtaken us, we were now at last safely out of the grip of the *nyika*.

• Unfortunately the illness from which I had suffered more or less throughout the return journey had reduced me almost to a skeleton, and I was in such a low state of health that when the Principal Medical Officer of the Protectorate saw me on the following morning, he sent me before a Medical Board who ordered my immediate return to England.

I said good-bye to Abbudi at the railway station, while Munyakai bin Diwani and one or two others came with me as far as Mombasa. All wished me a good recovery and a speedy return for another *safari*, so that we might again journey together through the East African wilds.

## APPENDIX

### HOW A MERU BIRD TRAP IS MADE

FIRST of all, a number of twigs some 18 inches long, the tops of which are too weak to tempt a bird to perch on them, are procured. These are fixed in the ground close together in a circle which has a diameter of about 15 inches. In the fence so formed, a doorway of some 8 inches is left, as an entrance for the bird.

Next, three tough, thin, flexible rods are required, each long enough to admit of being bent into a half-circle, so that when the ends are fixed into the ground the crest of the archway so formed is about on a level with the top of the fence.

These rods are fixed in the ground, one in front of the opening and one on either side of it, as follows. The first rod is bent to form a half-circle, and fixed firmly in the ground in front of, and close up to, the opening which forms the entrance to the enclosure, as shown in the photograph. A stiff, straight stick is placed on the ground between this and the fence, so that the ends touch the feet of the archway and project beyond them for a couple of inches.

The second rod is fixed on one side of the entrance, as

shown in the photograph, by first passing one end of it *outside* the arch already formed and *inside* the horizontal stick at its feet, which it touches, the end of the rod being pushed down into the ground at about a third of the distance between the feet of the first archway; the rod is then bent over in the form of a half circle, the loose end being firmly fixed in the ground among the fence twigs.



"A WOOLLY HEADED AND MUCH WRINKLED OLD NATIVE SETTING A CUNNINGLY MADE BIRD TRAP." (See p. 360).

The third and last rod is secured in a similar way on the other side of the entrance, as shown in the picture.

When this is done it will be found that the entrance rod will be inclined towards the fence as much as is required, and the three arches will be rigid.

The next part of the contrivance consists of a fairly stout but flexible sapling, about 7 feet long, which is driven



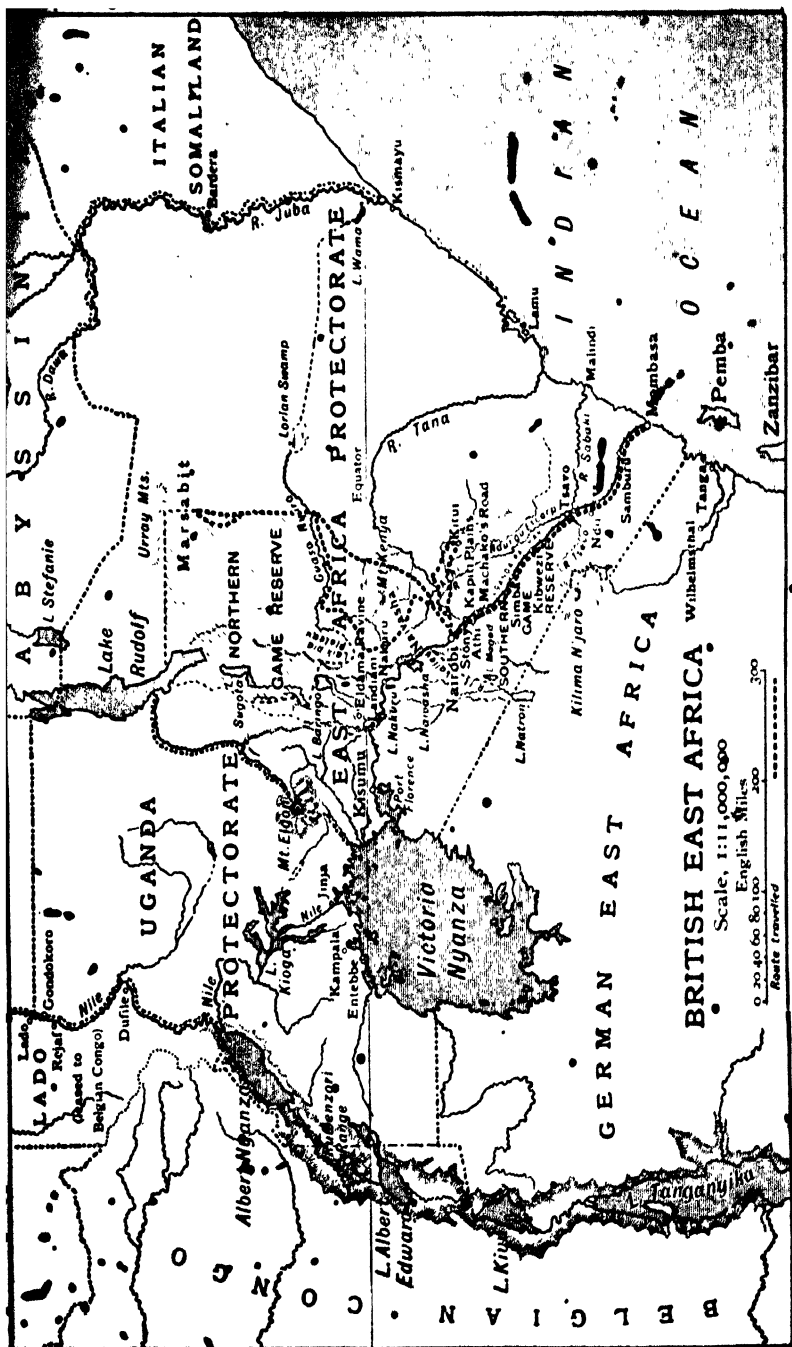
well into the ground at the back of the fence, exactly opposite the gateway, and about 5 feet from it.

To the top of this is tied a piece of string, which is then pulled over the central archway until the sapling is in a bow shape over the trap. While in this strained position the point where the string touches the crown of the archway is noted, and here the string is firmly tied round a thin piece of stick, some 6 inches long, at about an inch from one end of it. This piece of stick is then pulled down *behind* and *under* the crown of the entrance arch, and the end of it to which the string has been tied is placed against the *outside* of the crown of the arch. Holding the string taut in this position with one hand, a cross-piece of about 9 inches is momentarily held with the other hand low down against the arched rods at each side of the entrance. The tip of the lower end of the stick to which the string is attached is then placed *outside* and against this short cross-piece so that it grips it and holds it in position by the great strain on the string attached to the sapling. The string does not end where it is knotted to the 6-inch stick, but is continued in the form of a running noose, which is made into a large loop and spread out over the open space round the 9-inch cross-piece, so that the bird will not go through the opening into the trap without first hopping on to the cross-stick. A suitable bait of bird food is placed inside the doorway, and the trap is then ready for action. The moment the bird perches on the cross-stick the latter drops down, and the sapling at the back being then released flies up with great force, pulling the noose tight on to the bird at the same time. The speed with which the sapling springs back is generally enough to kill the bird outright, as it is dashed against the crown of the entrance arch rod while in the tight embrace of the noose.

• This trap is apparently quite successful in the wilds, but I very much doubt if our civilised birds with plenty of food about would let themselves be caught in a contrivance of this description, except, perhaps, in winter, with snow thick on the ground.

This device is given in detail to show the ingenuity and cleverness of the native, who constructs the entire trap with a few sticks and a string made out of the fibre plant. It also shows that he is a keen observer, and knows how to take advantage of the foolishness of a bird, which prefers to enter through a complicated doorway rather than fly in at the open top.





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